

DN disabilitynow

the campaigning newspaper that puts you in the picture

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First to be shopped

BY JOHN PRING

The retail industry has been given a huge wake-up call over its failure to improve access, as Debenhams became the first store to be sued under new Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) duties.

Greg Jackson (*right*), a wheelchair user, is furious that he is prevented from browsing in the menswear section of Debenhams' Derby store because of four steps leading up to a mezzanine level.

His legal case is supported by the Disability Rights Commission (DRC), which described Debenhams' failure to deal with access barriers in at least 20 of its stores as "unacceptable" and "a second-class service to disabled customers".

Debenhams made £300 million pre-tax profits in 2003-2004. Like other companies, it had

nine years to prepare for the new duties to "alter, adapt or remove" physical barriers, before it became law last October.

Caroline Gooding, who leads the DRC's work on the new duties, said many other large chains had taken their responsibilities "very seriously" but there was still "a lot of complacency" in the sector.

"The biggest problem is that there are an awful lot of medium to small outfits who simply are not taking this seriously."

Mr Jackson, who first complained in January 2004, said improvements would be "relatively cheap and simple". "Instead, I'm in the embarrassing situation of having to ask for clothes to be brought down to me by a shop assistant, which means it's impossible to browse properly and places pressure on me to buy."

David Bonnett, a leading architect and disability access



consultant, said legal cases would "start shaking things up".

"Every major store manager in the country will know about this in about two weeks' time and they will all start to twitch." But he warned there was a lack of good advice on access issues.

Meanwhile, Chris Richfield, head of access for the charity Scope, said: "There is a lot of work to do. A more positive response from retail will generate a positive response from customers."

As DN went to press, Scope

launched its Access Equality Award Scheme, which will reward service providers that have dealt with barriers to access for disabled people.

Jane Vernon, an RNIB legal officer, said of the Debenhams case: "This will make organisations large and small realise that actually this act does have teeth and they have got to address this."

And Victoria Waddington, a disability access consultant, said: "I have a lot of clients who are sitting on the fence, thinking 'we need to do it but we have not got any money'."

A Debenhams spokeswoman said it was continuing to discuss the case with the DRC and would install a platform lift in Derby within three months.

The British Retail Consortium (BRC) said it was "watching the case with interest" but that most BRC members had "responded positively to their new obligations".



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Tell us about your access issues

October will mark the first anniversary of the DDA part 3 and we want to hear about readers' access nightmares and success stories for our next edition. If getting into your local Italian restaurant is worse than negotiating Spaghetti Junction or if reading the small print on store credit agreements requires a microscope or a degree in Latin, contact DN. We also want positive experiences; can you now reach all items in your library? Whatever your story, and especially if you have taken action to address access issues, contact sarah.hobson@scope.org.uk or tel: 0207 619 7324.

Fear of getting sued is limiting lifestyle choices

Health and safety risk assessment procedures are "leading to diminished opportunities across life" for disabled people, according to a Disability Rights Commission document released as part of its national Disability Debate.

In *Whose Risk Is It Anyway?*, the DRC calls for a "grown-up" debate to stop organisations and authorities taking "wholly disproportionate steps" against disabled people and "limiting their choices to participate fully in society".

Bert Massie, DRC chair, said: "Fear of litigation is

replacing sensible action and the end result is disabled people being denied the chance to take decisions and weigh up risks for themselves every day."

In one case, Lynne Coupe, from Chorley, Lancashire, went three months without a shower after her stairlift broke down.

Social services refused to install a new stairlift because they said she needed help getting on and off.

She was told "using the lift in these circumstances would be against health and safety rules", even though she had been helped on and off her

stairlift for eight years.

They offered to take her to the hospital once a week to be showered but her husband Francis refused and installed a shower in the sun lounge, despite being refused permission by the council.

Mr Coupe said: "If the rules being applied to disabled people were the same as those being applied to non-disabled people, then no one would ever get out of bed in the morning."

Lancashire social services are investigating the case.

* Tel: 08457 622 633,
www.disabilitydebate.org

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disabilitynow

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7/7 support

BY JOHN PRING

Volunteers from the Limbless Association (LA) have started offering advice and support to two survivors of the 7 July bombings in London.

Volunteers from the charity, who are amputees themselves, have met with one of the injured women and with Garri Holness (*right*), who has spoken publicly about losing his left leg in the Piccadilly line explosion.

Another 20 people lost limbs in the attacks and are recovering in hospital.

In the wake of the bombings, LA passed on its details, information packs and leaflets

ROLAND HOSKINS/DAILY MAIL



to hospitals where those injured had been taken.

Grania Hyde-Smith, information and campaigns officer for LA, said the charity was hoping to work, if needed, with some of the 20 other victims, once they recovered further.

She said the volunteers –

part of the charity's 300-strong volunteer visitor service – would provide empathy, support and advice.

"At this stage, we can provide them with a friend and someone to listen and tell them about prosthetic limbs and go through the basics.

"Quite a lot of times when people have lost limbs they do not know what to expect. It is very frightening.

"I think probably the most valuable thing an amputee can have is to see someone else who is established and happy and independent getting on with their lives."

* Helpline, tel: 0845 230 0025, www.limbless-association.org

Communication blackout

Two deafblind people caught up in the London bombings have called on the government to force local councils to fund Braille mobile phones.

Anne Rogers was close to the bus in Tavistock Square when it exploded and was cut by flying debris. Her guide dog was too scared to work so she had to stumble to her office and blacked out when she reached reception.

She said the incident proved the need for someone to develop a mobile Braille textphone. She said: "If only I'd been able

to phone my office, I could have got a colleague to come and help me communicate."

Jim Hines, who uses a red and white cane, arrived at St Pancras station near the site of two of the bombings on the evening of 7 July. He had no idea the attacks had taken place or why there was no transport. He couldn't call a friend because he didn't have a mobile phone. "I ended up standing on the pavement outside the station all night wondering what was going on."

He only made it home next

morning to find friends had reported him missing.

Campaigners want funding for Braille mobiles, which cost about £3,000, and to develop a Braille mobile textphone.

Liz Ball, from the deafblind charity Sense, said one idea would be to develop textphone software that could be used with Braille mobile phones.

A Department of Health spokeswoman said: "Providing specific types of equipment for individuals would be a local decision for social services departments."

Sculptor saluted



Adam Reynolds (1959-2005) was a giant. We first exhibited together in 1990 at the *Out of Ourselves* exhibition at the Diorama. Entering the private view, the first work I saw was Adam's sculpture "Taking Leave", a lead suitcase filled with autumn leaves – a poignant work, made more resonant now.

His work always demonstrated quality and intellectual rigour, weaving together history, archaeology, humour, mythology, geometry, ideas and materials in a wholly satisfying way.

He also influenced change, playing a pivotal role in disability rights and access, working with many museums and arts organisations including Shape, the Arts Council and Tate Modern.

We had much in common: daughters, a love of Italy and sculpture. The great sadness for sculpture and disability art was that his best was still to come.

His first performance piece, *Sisyphus*, would have combined rich spectacle and homage to art and mythology. He died three days before the event should have taken place.

The last time I saw Adam was at a private view of his sculpture for a Zen garden in Buckinghamshire, surrounded by people who loved his work and him. Like all great performers he left us wanting more but took leave too soon.

Tony Heaton

* A memorial service for Adam will take place in London in the autumn. Details to be announced.

Census questions need rethink

A think tank has called on the Office of National Statistics (ONS) to improve its census questions that provide information about disabled people.

The main concern of the group, part of disability employment company Breakthrough UK, is that inaccurate information, such as counting disabled and "sick" people in one group, can have a detrimental effect on services and planning as well as how funds are allocated to local authorities.

Member Pam Thomas said questions should be more in line with the social model of disability. "What they should be asking is, 'Are there things in society that stop you from doing what you need to do?'"

An ONS spokeswoman said the concern had been highlighted in a number of responses to a general consultation it had recently run on census data.

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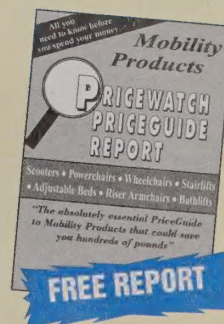
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Ride of their life: Disabled people try out a new sport at the launch of the Step Forward Cycling Club, in Thanet, Kent. As part of Kent County Council's Outdoor Pursuits Disability Project, the cycling club will use adapted cycles along the route between Minnis Bay and Reculver, with physiotherapists and coaches on call to help riders enjoy the sport. Tel: 08458 247 247, www.kent.gov.uk

Anger as right-to-life ruling is overturned

BY PRIYA KOTECHA

A disabled man said he is "disappointed" after the Court of Appeal overturned his earlier court victory that gave seriously ill patients the right to stop doctors withdrawing artificial food and drink.

Leslie Burke (right), who has cerebellar ataxia, won a High Court case in July 2004 to alter General Medical Council (GMC) guidance*, which gives doctors authority to remove artificial feeding.

The guidance allows removal from patients who can no longer communicate, if it is said to be in the patient's "best interests" or too burdensome over possible benefits.

Last month, Appeal Court judge Lord Phillips upheld the



guidance after the GMC argued that the original ruling was not in the best interests of patients and would alter the nature of doctor/patient relationships. He said it would mean doctors would have to provide treatment of no benefit to certain patients.

Mr Burke told DN: "It feels like a football match; I've scored first, then they've scored and now it's half-time. But I don't feel my position has been properly heard, and I don't feel these

three judges have understood."

Simone Aspis, parliamentary and campaigns worker for the British Council of Disabled People, said the ruling would have particularly negative consequences for disabled people. "This is outrageous discrimination. How can it be in anyone's best interests to be starved to a cruel and uncomfortable death, regardless of how long they have to live?"

A spokeswoman for the GMC said: "Doctors want clear guidance to help ensure individual patients receive the care that's right for them."

* *Withholding and Withdrawing Life-prolonging Treatments: Good Practice in Decision-making*, tel: 0845 357 3456, www.gmc-uk.org

• Leslie Burke profile, page 18

Cyclists tell Motability: 'Get on yer bike'

A sports umbrella body is trying to help persuade Motability to extend its car scheme to disabled motorcyclists.

For two years, the Disabled Motorcyclists Association (DMA)* has been calling on Motability to supply motorbikes with adaptations as part of their scheme, which already includes

wheelchairs and scooters.

But after Motability said it believed that "the scheme should not branch out into areas in which we have no expertise", the DMA approached the Central Council for Physical Recreation (CCPR) – a body that represents national sports

organisations – for help.

In a letter to the DMA, Motability said such a scheme would prove too expensive for disabled motorcyclists.

The DMA told DN it would help Motability introduce motorcycles onto the scheme. Project manager Anthony Pearson said: "We fully under-

stand their concerns, but we would like them to be a bit more practical and flexible on this issue. Just because it may not work on paper, doesn't mean it won't work in practice."

Charlotte Edwards, policy officer for CCPR, said: "We have spoken to Motability and one of their directors will call

the person dealing with this at the DMA. We will continue to work with DMA on what we can do next."

A Motability spokeswoman confirmed the facts in the letter to the DMA, but would not comment further.

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Police force in the dock

An award-winning special constable with a hearing impairment is to become one of the first people to sue a police force under the employment duties of the Disability Discrimination Act.

Dennis McCoy, from Bradford, has worked thousands of hours unpaid for West Yorkshire Police over the last two years. He was even named special constable of the year.

But when a medical revealed a minor hearing impairment in one ear, he was barred from becoming a paid, full-time police officer.

His solicitor, Fraser Sampson, said his treatment was "illogical and unfair" while a Disability Rights Commission spokesman said such discrimination was "quite a widespread practice in the police".

A force spokeswoman declined to comment until the case was resolved.

No room at the inns

BY ELIZABETH CHOPPIN

Some of the UK's biggest hotel groups are failing to accommodate disabled people, a survey has found.

Leonard Cheshire investigated 30 hotels across nine groups in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Its report* found a host of problems, including inaccessible bathing facilities and elevator buttons, room service menus not available in accessible formats, a lack of text-phones in rooms and too few hearing induction loops in reception areas.

The best performing hotel

group was Thistle, with 22.7 points out of a possible 27, while the lowest scorers were the Moat House, Ramada Jarvis and Best Western, with scores of 13.7, 14 and 14.3, respectively.

The worst individual score went to the Ramada Jarvis in Glasgow, with zero points. A staff member on the telephone told researchers: "We don't take people in wheelchairs."

A Ramada spokesperson said that it was not Ramada policy to refuse wheelchair users, and added: "We have been in prolonged negotiations with the landlords of the property regarding major redevelopment plans of the hotel. Subject to planning approval, we would expect them to commence in the winter of 2005."

Harry Heath, a wheelchair user from Ipswich, said in many cases hotels advertise themselves as "accessible" when they are actually not and that he and his wife rarely use them anymore.

"What bothers me is that the information [on access requirements] is available, but hotels don't seem to be conscious of it or take the time to incorporate it," he said.

* *No Room at the Inn*, tel: 020 7802 8229, www.leonard-cheshire.org.uk



Top dogs: Assistance dog charities mark the launch of a new leaflet*, which promotes their work to improve access, mobility and independence for their members. Pictured left to right are Kim Nowak and Eva of Hearing Dogs for Deaf People, Dave Kent and Reuben from Guide Dogs for the Blind Association, and Judy Wilkinson with Kermit from Canine Partners. * Tel: 01844 348 100,

New work scheme to help 1B million into work

A taskforce has been set up to help people with mental health problems and learning difficulties move into employment.

Following the government's announcement that it hopes to move one million people off incapacity benefit (IB) in the next five years (*DN, July*), leading disability employer Remploy and the charities RADAR and Mencap have started setting

out plans for pilot training and mentoring programmes to assist the two groups in getting jobs.

This might include assigning buddies to offer support to people with learning difficulties when they take up employment.

Remploy's chief executive, Bob Warner, said the new strategy was launched after work and pensions secretary, David

Blunkett, said in June that 40 per cent of those on IB have mental health problems, and that "the big challenge" was changing attitudes.

Mr Warner added: "At its highest level, people's expectations have changed.

"Going back ten or 15 years many people in [these groups]

wouldn't have expected to be employed. Now practice needs to catch up with expectation."

Kate Nash (*left*), chief executive of RADAR, said: "These are the people who face the biggest difficulties in finding work...we are seeking guidance from a broad range of experience and knowledge,

from those who have direct experience, opinion formers, sociologists, the trade unions and disabled people themselves."

The taskforce aims to implement the pilots by the end of December, and if successful, the programmes will be rolled out nationally.

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In brief

Jackson drama

A new BBC2 drama has been inspired by the life of Jacqueline Jackson, the mother of seven children, including four boys with autistic spectrum disorders. *Magnificent 7* will star Helena Bonham Carter as Maggi, the mother. The show is being filmed in Blackpool and Bolton.

Onetel tops table

The website of phone company Onetel has been voted as the most accessible among its peers. AbilityNet* reviewed the websites of ten leading telecoms companies and only Onetel and information site Kingston Communications were given four stars. The lowest performers were NTL, Orange, 3 and T-Mobile.

* www.abilitynet.org.uk

Poll position slips in Scotland

BY ELIZABETH CHOPPIN

Accessibility in Scottish polling stations took a downward turn in May's general election.

Despite a recent push to include disabled people in the electoral process, research by Capability Scotland, published in August, shows voting this year was less accessible than in the 2003 Scottish elections.

Twenty four per cent of people who took part in Polls Apart 4 Scotland survey reported major access problems at polling stations, compared with 17 per cent two years before.

The survey found more than half lacked disabled parking spaces and more than one third of stations had no large print ballot paper. There was poor guidance for postal voters in at least a third of cases.

Capability Scotland's media manager, Julie Laird, said:

"We're disappointed that instead of the 2005 general election being the most accessible ever, Scotland has taken a step back with some old problems starting to creep back in again. The challenge now is to identify the problems and find ways to solve them."

A spokeswoman for the Electoral Commission said: "We are aware that in practice there is not always a lot of choice in more remote regions and access issues need to be balanced against closing down a large number of polling stations, which could deprive electors of a convenient local polling station."

"We recognise there is still work to be done and we will continue to work with electoral administrators to increase the ways in which access to polling stations can be improved."

She also said local authorities are responsible for polling



station accessibility. But Danny Alexander (*above*), Liberal Democrat spokesperson on disability and an MP in Scotland, said: "The voting process is overseen by the local authorities and councils, but the electoral commission has overall responsibility. I hope that the electoral commission will consider this report carefully and make changes accordingly."

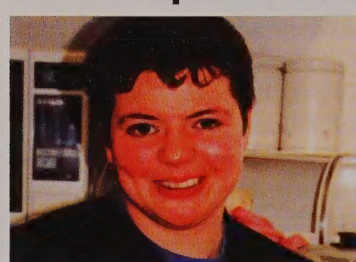
He added: "I'm very concerned if there are issues around disabled voters taking part in the democratic process. It needs to be made as easy as possible for everyone to vote."

Social service plan questioned

Disability and social service leaders have said plans to overhaul social services for adults must be better defined and receive cash in order to succeed, in their responses to the government's green paper on the issue.

The paper, released in April, promised disabled people "higher quality support and greater control over their lives", but said changes would need to be met with existing resources by redesigning services.

The British Council of Disabled People (BCODP), Association of Directors of Social Services (ADSS), and others, reject the government's assertion that implementation will require no extra funding.



Simone Aspis (*above*), of the BCODP, told DN: "The cost of funding and support is not necessarily cheap and has to be planned for. There are management costs to go with it too."

The ADSS has also demanded a rethink on proposals to introduce individual budgets to "give people greater control over the services they need".

In its response, the association criticises the lack of clari-

ty about the new system, saying members "question the wisdom of two parallel systems where there is considerable potential for confusion, unnecessary bureaucracy and duplication of costs".

The Inter Agency Group, consisting of agencies from the statutory and voluntary sectors, said the government would need to ensure all interested parties were involved in the introduction of any changes.

"More work needs to be done looking at working with and supporting local communities and the voluntary sector, given the ageing society, especially in relation to carers and volunteering," its response says.

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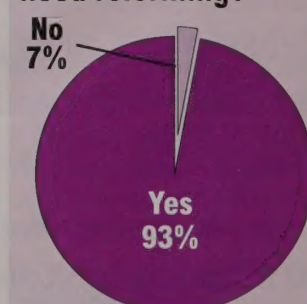
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Loan shark jailed

BY LISA BRATBY

A loan shark who built up an £800,000 empire by preying on disabled and vulnerable people has been imprisoned after being caught by a government-funded team aimed at combating illegal money lending.

Mark Johnson, who received a sentence of three years and nine months, regularly intimidated older and disabled people when they were unable to pay debts. At least three disabled people gave statements in the case.

Birmingham Crown Court heard that Mr Johnson's standard rate for a £500 loan was

£50 a week, with a repayment of £980. If a borrower missed a payment, he would add a penalty to the outstanding amount and, if unable to pay, borrowers would be threatened with violence and the removal of possessions, including disability benefit books.

Mr Johnson, who admitted charges of blackmail, illegal money lending and other offences, was arrested after a tip-off to a Birmingham Trading Standards' team set up to target loan sharks.

The Birmingham team is part of a £2 million Department for Trade and Industry-funded pilot project

set up last September.

Councillor Neil Eustace, chair of Birmingham Trading Standards Public Protection Committee, said: "This is the first of many cases being brought by this specialist team. We will support anybody that is undergoing persecution by a loan shark."

Sue Edwards, senior policy officer for Citizen's Advice, said: "People don't come to us for advice on this because they are scared but we would tell them to go to the police."

Proposed changes to the law to protect borrowers from loan sharks is expected to proceed through the next parliament.



Keeping up with the Jones's: Catherine Zeta Jones receives a bouquet from Kelly Davies at the opening of a new hydrotherapy pool at the Longfields Association, a day centre for disabled adults in the film star's home town of Swansea.

700 on protection register

More than 700 people have been barred from working with vulnerable adults in the 12 months since the government introduced a protection register, but dangerous workers are still slipping through the net.

By the end of June, there had been 2,124 referrals to the Protection of Vulnerable Adults (PoVA) list, with 155 people permanently barred from working with vulnerable adults and another 559 provisionally placed on the list.

But Molly Mattingly, assistant director of The Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities (FPLD),

said the true scale of abuse was probably much higher, as PoVA does not cover staff in day centres or healthcare settings.

She said "dangerous workers" were "almost certainly slipping through the net", and called for better training for care staff and managers.

The learning difficulty charities Ann Craft Trust, Voice UK and Respond said they were "horrified" at the figures, but believed PoVA was "a significant development in social care". They echoed the FPLD's concerns about areas not covered by PoVA.

An audit by King's College

London of the first 100 referrals found that 81 per cent were from residential homes.

More than a third concerned male workers, even though they make up only five to 15 per cent of staff. The audit found neglect and physical abuse were more likely in residential homes, and financial abuse in domiciliary care.

The government is developing a new scheme, due in 2007, which will build on existing child and adult protection schemes, including PoVA.

Care failings addressed

The government is to set up a central source of clear information to help people choose the right care home for themselves or their relatives.

The measure is part of an action plan* in response to a study of the care home market by the Office of Fair Trading**, published in May.

The study was sparked by a super-complaint from the consumer organisation Which?, that focused on aspects such as the role of local authorities, contracts and price transparency.

Which? said the government's response fell "well short of fully addressing the problems" and was "vague and short on detail".

It called on the Health Select Committee to "take a long, hard look" at how local authorities treat their legal duties and care home consumers.

* tel: 020 7215 5000, www.dti.gov.uk/ccpl/topics2/marketreport.htm
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Ship ahoy: Children from the Elmfield School for Deaf Children take part in a drama workshop, marking the relaunch of Isambard Kingdom Brunel's steam ship Great Britain. The ship, in Bristol, has been made more accessible with new BSL video guides.

• Tel: 0117 926 0680 or see www.ssgreatbritain.org

SEN failings

BY ELIZABETH CHOPPIN

Campaigners have criticised figures that show pupils with special educational needs [SEN] in some parts of the country are 24 times more likely to be educated in special schools and other segregated settings than in others.

A report on rankings of local education authorities (LEAs) in England, based on data from 2002 to 2004, reveals that one third of the 148 LEAs have increased segregation over the past three years.

The most inclusive LEA, Newham in London, had 0.06 per cent of its 0-19 year olds with statements placed in special schools, compared with the lowest performer, South Tyneside, where 1.46 per cent of SEN pupils were segregated.



One of the report's authors Mark Vaughan (*above*), co-director of the Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education, questioned LEAs' commitment to inclusion.

He said: "All LEAs are working to the same laws and regulations, which call for inclusion of disabled pupils... if Newham can do it with academic and social success, then so can every other authority."

Mr Vaughan added: "Inclusion of disabled people is

a human rights issue, not a passing fashion, in spite of the current heated national debate prompted by Baroness Warnock. It is time for government to embrace inclusion as a long-term rights commitment."

But South Tyneside LEA's head of access and inclusion, Amanda Bradley, said there had been an error in its figures and inclusion was in fact increasing in the area.

She added: "South Tyneside has retained six special schools and these are currently being reviewed. Many pupils on a special school roll work inclusively with their local mainstream school. Inclusion in mainstream schools and special schools and units is seen as a continuum of support for children with special educational needs across the borough."

Disabled children should not be so 'special'

Decisions on whether and how disabled people should be educated in mainstream schools often fail to account for the opinions of young people themselves, according to researchers.

The RITE research project, results of which will be published in October, is investigating the transition from school to further education and independent adulthood for young adults with complex physical and/or communication needs.

Thirty-three young disabled adults from across the UK gave in-depth accounts of their school experiences and initial findings show that using labels such as "special" and "different" created difficulties for them.

One participant said: "The mere fact that you are actually categorised as 'special', for me, means that you are being cut off. It is like being a branch to the main part of a tree; you cut that branch off, it is not going

to get all the nutrition from the rest of the roots.

"It really did handicap you more than your actual physical disability."

Researchers said participants felt that mainstream schools brought them a "sense of self-esteem", but that many disabled children were still taught separately from other pupils.

One person said: "We were taught as a group with no mainstream students but were

then expected to mix at break time... one day I overheard some students saying 'the disabled students shouldn't be here because they are lowering the rest of the school down'... I thought, if you were in class with us you would know we were the same as you."

Researchers concluded that such experiences were insufficiently "understood, respected or acted upon by education providers or policy makers".

School leavers left confused

A variation in levels of support for young disabled people leaving school is affecting their success in early adulthood, research has shown.

A report, commissioned by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and written by the Institute for Employment Studies, examined the experiences of 1,020 disabled youngsters as they moved from post-16 education into adult life.

Results show that while organisations such as further education colleges, Jobcentre Plus, Connexions and work experience placements can be effective at supporting young adults, in many cases they "have not operated as well as they could".

The report says that one in ten participants did not know how to find out about training opportunities or work, and young men were more likely than women to be employed three years after leaving school.

"Many young people have made little or no progress, whilst others lacked adequate support or have received unco-ordinated support," the report says.

The mother of one male survey participant illustrated the need for one single point of contact or a clearly defined "co-ordinating role" for youngsters leaving education.

"He needs somebody or some people to reassure him not to give up, because there is something out there for him."

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BY PRIYA KOTECHEA

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Rachel Hurst, director of Disability Awareness in Action, said it was "an important contribution to research" but failed to uncover the grassroots reality, that many disabled people in Asia remain isolated at home.

ADL/11 04

In brief

Cell breakthrough

The controversial process of making stem cells from human embryonic cells has been achieved by specialists at the Universities of Edinburgh and Milan.

It is hoped that the cells, which help build the brain and central nervous system, could help with future Parkinson's and Alzheimer's treatments.

Lloyds loan blunder

Lloyds TSB has been criticized by the Citizens Advice Bureau in Burton-upon-Trent for loaning £40,000 to a disabled man who has bipolar disorder without carrying out significant checks on his circumstances and background.

The man gave bundles of the money away to homeless people while under the illusion he was a wealthy philanthropist.

A Lloyds spokesman insisted strict checks are carried out on every application.

Wheelchair tragedy

Jane McAllister, 52, who fell into the River Peffrey in Dingwall, Scotland, while strapped to her wheelchair, died after being taken to hospital.

Ms McAllister was rescued by an off-duty police-woman after her dog's barking alerted passers-by. Police have asked for eye witnesses to contact them.

For Pete's sake

Footage of ex-Libertine's rocker Pete Doherty slashing his own chest with a broken bottle will be cut from an upcoming BBC documentary entitled *Who the F*ck is Pete Doherty?* because the network feared "copycat" behaviour in fans.

The mental health charity Samaritans had expressed concern about the consequences of showing the scenes.

Collie Molly appeal

Deaf couple Paul and Katherine Hancock have appealed for the return of their hearing dog, a black and white border collie named Molly, who they say is an essential part of their lives in Derby.

The couple's daughter said: "My dad says he feels she is definitely within Derby somewhere."

"He feels someone has taken her because she's a very friendly dog."

Parenting support call

BY ELIZABETH CHOPPIN

Mainstream parenting provision does not fully meet the needs of parents of deaf children, according to the National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS).

Research published by the society says parents of deaf children often do not receive accessible or relevant information, such as how to identify the difference between communication and behaviour issues.

The NDCS plans to create a new parenting curriculum specific to the needs of parents of deaf children, including booklets, seminars and internet courses.

The programme will bring parents together regularly with trained parenting facilitators.

The project's line manager, Pauline Walker, who is a parent of a deaf child, said: "One of the best ways for parents of deaf children to learn is to be with other parents in a forum where they can meet and discuss experiences. They also need to be told that a lot of what they're doing is fine."

Brian Symington, director of RNID Northern Ireland, said it was vital to have proper support systems in place early on for parents whose children have gone through newborn hearing screening. He said: "Early intervention is key to give the child the best possible start in life."

• *Audit of parenting programmes and parent consultation report, tel: 020 7490 8656, www.ndcs.org.uk*



Hot stuff: Jamie Weller, who is training for his hot air balloon pilot's licence, gets ready to take part in the Discovery Channel International Balloon Fiesta in Bristol. Representing St Dunstons, he said: "I'm thrilled to have been given the opportunity to sit my pilot exams as flying has always fascinated me and has been a dream since I was young."

75% of mental health trusts fail to get 4 stars

A leading mental health charity is calling for service users to be allowed to play more of a role in measuring the performance of mental health trusts.

The Mental Health Foundation (MHF) will host an event in November to examine how inspections can take more account of the views of people with mental health problems.

David Crepaz-Keay, a senior policy advisor on patient and

public involvement for MHF, said: "It's time that targets were set by the people most affected by services' successes and failures. Service user involvement remains meaningless while targets are defined by professionals and service managers."

His comments came after the Healthcare Commission published its final set of annual star ratings for English NHS trusts.

They showed the number of

mental health trusts achieving the maximum three stars had risen from 18 to 25 per cent, with those receiving zero stars falling from eight to six per cent.

Mental health charity Mind said it was "a matter of grave concern" that only a quarter of trusts received the top rating.

The Healthcare Commission said: "The commission has worked closely with mental health trusts to improve the

quality of data on performance but the challenge remains to measure what really matters to patients and staff in the most meaningful way."

Next year, the commission will rate trusts using a new annual health check, which it hopes will give a more comprehensive picture of performance.

Mind said it hoped the new system would be more "robust and transparent".



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Past winners: (from left) Sarah Lynham, Kirsty Taylor and Gemma Parker with former chair of Camelot, Caroline Pickering (back right)

Young disabled people are being called on to submit their dream ideas to be in with a chance of winning £3,000.

The annual 4Front Awards, funded by the Camelot Foundation, aim to develop skills and leadership potential by inviting individual or groups of youngsters between the ages of 11 and 25 to submit video clips on "the dreams they'd like to make happen".

This year's themes are "improving my community", "health and well-being", "standing up for my rights" and "arts and music".

The contest started in 2003 and two out of the 16 prizes in

the last two years have gone to disabled contestants.

Kirsty Taylor, 16, and wheelchair users Sarah Lynham, 15, and Gemma Parker, 15, won in 2004 for their project, *Fun for All in Cornwall*, which involved rating accessibility of tourist attractions in Cornwall.

Ms Lynham said: "Winning a 4front Award and going to the awards ceremony in London was a fabulous experience. It was nice to stand out from the crowd and know that you were doing something to make a difference."

• For details on how to enter tel: 020 7828 6085, www.4frontawards.org

BY PRIYA KOTECHA

A disabled woman has criticised the "astronomical" prices charged for wheelchair maintenance.

Elizabeth Nelson said she felt "taken for a ride" after having to fork out £595, charged by Aldersley Battery Chairs in the West Midlands, to replace the drive shaft on her wheelchair. She said the part then broke within a month.

The hub of the chair broke when her friend Richard Dutton (right) borrowed it.

She told DN: "They charged me £516, including labour and travel to London where Richard lives. I was told it would cost £600 for a call-out if they had come to repair it in Dorset where I live. It's absolutely disgraceful."

The receipt shows the cost of the drive shaft at £79, with the rest being charged for travel,



one hour of labour and "full servicing".

But Mr Dutton said: "The delivery and fitting was £500 and they charged £16 for tightening up the nuts and bolts. There was no full service."

John Chamberlain, managing director of Aldersley Battery Chairs, said: "Clients have an option for a dedicated call out or to wait until we have other work in the area."

"We normally take a computer routemaster mileage. In this case it's a 270 mile round trip, including 11 hours' labour, comfort breaks throughout the journey, the overtime element and the work done by a factory-trained technician with a few years' experience."

Bob Ross, a helpline advisor for the Disabled Living Foundation (DLF), said: "When people are purchasing equipment it's important they shop around and check on aftersales service and level of care."

"If people have trouble after purchasing equipment, there are trading standards offices in all areas that people can complain to."

"There are a lot of suppliers out there and by calling the DLF helpline*, experienced advisers can guide you on the various options," he added.

* tel: 0845 130 9177, www.dlf.org.uk

Phone keeps ringing at DRC

The Disability Rights Commission's (DRC) helpline has now dealt with more than half a million enquiries in the five years since it was set up.

There was a "noticeable surge" when new access laws came into force last October, with the helpline taking nearly 125,000 enquiries during 2004/05.

The figures were released as the DRC published its annual Impact Report*.

The report said the DRC had played a "key role" in strengthening the Disability Discrimination Act, had taken two successful landmark employment cases and launched a national debate on the future of equality

for disabled people.

Meanwhile, the helpline has installed a videophone** to provide advice to those whose first language is BSL or who prefer to communicate face to face.

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Protest over AA job fears

Members of the GMB trade union and disability activists protested outside the AA's headquarters in Basingstoke last month amid claims that the company is continuing to target disabled staff for job cuts.

DN reported in June that the union had contacted the Disability Rights Commission after claiming a "performance review" had forced some disabled employees to choose between an £18,000 severance payment or extra training.

The latest problem, according to GMB representative Paul Maloney, is that work is being moved from Basingstoke to Cheadle, and changes to roles mean disabled people fear they may be adversely affected by new performance management procedures.

A spokeswoman told DN that no disabled people would be affected by the move to Cheadle.

Continence count 'disappointing'

BY LISA BRATBY

Only six integrated continence services have been set up in England, 18 months after the whole country should have been covered.

The National Service Framework for Older People (NSFOP) set a target for every part of England to have a service by April 2004.

An integrated service should be more efficient and ensure patients do not fall between different health, social and education services, according to The Continence Foundation (CF).

But there are still only six in

England; in Bournemouth, Leeds, Nottingham, Bedford, Airedale and Sunderland; and one in Gwent, Wales.

Camden and Islington, Gloucestershire and South-East Essex should have a service by next year.

Judith Wardle, director of CF, said health authorities, primary care trusts and acute trusts should be working together to establish the services.

Ms Wardle said she was "disappointed but not surprised" at the figures, as "nobody from any government department has been energetically pushing this", and prima-

ry care trust boards pay little attention to the issue.

The Healthcare Commission is reviewing the NSFOP, with a report due early next year.

Deborah Klee, head of the commission's older people strategy, said: "We can't comment on the national picture at this stage but as things stand at the moment, integrated continence services are not as well developed as we would have expected in light of the NSF standard."

An estimated six million people in the UK have continence problems.

• *Bog standard is not good enough – see page 33*

Care goes hi-tech



A service user from Enfield wears a sensor around her neck

Disabled and older people from a London borough have been testing hi-tech equipment that could help them to stay living independently and safely in their own homes.

Enfield council and Enfield Primary Care Trust are hoping to make greater use of Telecare – technology that uses sensors to link people living at home to alarms at control centres.

The sensors can be worn as pendants or bracelets and can detect when someone has fallen or moved unexpectedly from room to room during the night.

The system can also monitor high blood pressure, breathing and heart rates. Care staff will visit the person if the system detects a problem.

Last month, 18 disabled and

older people tested out Telecare systems for themselves as part of a public consultation.

Margaret Allen, the council's commissioning manager for older people, said: "We are recruiting volunteers across the borough, who will be able to help test the equipment in real life situations."

"The potential for Telecare is enormous and it is expected to make a huge difference to people's lives."

She said Telecare would only be recommended after a "careful expert assessment" with the "full involvement of families and carers".

The Department of Health has said that Telecare should be available in all homes that need it by 2010.

Good gut reaction to cannabis

DN CAMPAIGN



Cannabis-based drugs could relieve some of the symptoms of inflammatory bowel disease (IBD), according to a new study.

Researchers from the University of Bath and Bath's Royal United Hospital said the findings could provide hope for the 90,000-180,000 people in the UK with conditions such as Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis.

They said their research

showed that cannabis-based drugs could help to heal the lining of the gut.

Dr Karen Wright, of the university's department of pharmacy and pharmacology, said: "This gives us the first evidence that very selective cannabis-derived treatments may be useful as future therapeutic strategies in the treatment of Crohn's and ulcerative colitis."

"Some extracts from cannabis, known as cannabinioids, closely resemble mole-

cules that occur naturally in our body, and by developing treatments that target this system we can help the body recover from some of the effects of these diseases."

Dr Peter McIntyre, medical advisor for the National Association for Colitis and Crohn's Disease and a consultant gastroenterologist, welcomed the research but said that it needed to be "followed through with extensive development work and clinical studies".

Medication delay warning

A new report has highlighted concerns that people with arthritis are having to wait too long to have their medication reviewed by GPs.

The Arthritis Care research* is the first to assess the effect of a series of public warnings about the potential dangers of some osteoarthritis (OA) drugs.

It found that almost half of those receiving drugs are still in pain most or all of the time, and just three in ten have discussed their drugs with their GP in the last 12 months.

Fewer than four in ten people with OA said they were happy with their current medication.

Under current government guidance, GPs should see patients with OA every 15 months to review their condition and medication. Arthritis Care wants reviews every six months.

* *Living with Arthritis – a spotlight on the continuing impact of chronic arthritis pain, www.arthritiscare.org.uk*

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Weir speeds to top

David Weir (*above*) captured two gold medals at the IAAF World Athletics Championships in Helsinki, after brilliant individual performances in both the 100 and 200m demonstration races.

On the final day of the championships in August, the 200m wheelchair race saw Weir beat Dutch rival Kenny van Weeghel by 0.33 seconds, in a time of 25.47 seconds.

On day one of the championships, Weir beat home favourite Leo-Pekka Tahti in the T54 100m race, clocking a time of 14.15 seconds and setting a new British record. Van Weeghel was just 0.04 seconds behind in second place, with Tahti third.

It gave Weir the edge going into the European Open Paralympic Championships, also in Finland, due to take place as *DN* went to press.

Cabinet king

BY PRIYA KOTECHA

Peter Norfolk powered his way to world number one in the wheelchair tennis rankings, after an impressive performance that saw him capture the Quads singles title at the British Open in Nottingham.

Brit Norfolk (*right*) beat American David Wagner 7-6 (7-3), 6-3, sealing a dream comeback to the super series home event – the equivalent of a grand slam – after injury prevented him participating last year.

He said: "I won it in 2003 and to win again in 2005 is fantastic; I've kept my unbeaten record."

Norfolk has captured five titles so far and says his trophy cabinet is now "overflowing".

Elsewhere, home favourite Jayant Mistry, playing alongside Robin Ammerlaan of the Netherlands, reached the men's



doubles final, but they fell at the final hurdle with a 6-2, 6-4 defeat to Australian David Hall and France's Michael Jeremiasz.

Earlier, Mistry reached the quarter-finals in the men's singles but could not make home advantage count, losing 1-6, 6-2, 6-3 to Austrian

Martin Legner.

Meanwhile, the best hope for a British women's title ended when Janet McMorran and Lucy Shuker lost in a straight sets drubbing, 6-0, 6-2, to Florence Gravelier of France and Maaïke Smit from the Netherlands in the semi-finals.

Commonwealth hopes

Paralympians Matthew Walker and Rhiannon Henry qualified for the Commonwealth Games after impressive performances at the swimming trials in Sheffield in August.

Henry set a new British S13 record in the 100m freestyle, touching in with a time of 1:02.28 and bettering the mark she set two years ago.

In the 50m freestyle, Walker

narrowly missed out on the world record by just over a tenth of a second, but still managed a new English record in a time of 28.71 seconds.

Walker said: "I'd been doing the time in training for the past couple of weeks so I knew I could do it, but there's always that niggling doubt."

He added: "To swim a qualification time for the

Commonwealths means a lot. To be able to represent England is really special."

Walker now hopes he can break the world record held by fellow Brit Robert Welbourn at the games, which take place in Melbourne next year.

"It's going to take a world record to win in Melbourne and I want to come away with a medal," he said.

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Building champions

Britain's jubilation following the winning 2012 Olympic bid has been superseded by calls from disability sports organisations for resources to help develop the next generation of Paralympians. Priya Kotecha reports

The quest is on to find the next generation of British Paralympians who will light up the capital when the Paralympic and Olympic Games come to London in 2012.

Since the city was announced as the host city in July, attention has centred on how to build infrastructure, venues and accommodation. But British sporting performances will be important too, and, as team GB promise to deliver the most inclusive games ever, Paralympian performances will have considerable influence over how the games are judged.

Established wheelchair athlete Sarah Loughran, 20, says the focus should be on the athletes: "I think it's important that we put on a great games, but it's more important to get the athletes there. There's no point having the best stadium, if you haven't got the best team you can have."

Paralympic sport needs extra resources, she adds. "We need more facilities, more tracks, more development at grassroots level and a lot more coaches." Funding is also vital. "It's so difficult to break into disability sport because, for example, wheelchairs cost £2,000 to £3,000," she says. "It's not like getting a pair of trainers."

Angus Robertson, chief executive of the London Sports Forum, says once the funding is in place, new facilities need to be built quickly. "Structures need to be there at grassroots level. We have to make sure that, as young talented people are spotted, they are getting picked up."

After London was announced as the 2012 host, the government pledged a further £1 million to the Talented Athlete Scholarship Scheme (TASS), aimed at supporting athletes with medal winning potential. But the proportion of disabled athletes who will receive a share remains to be seen; from the past year's £3 million grant, only 20 of the 1,000 recipients were disabled.

While schemes such as TASS

help youngsters who have proven sporting ability, Paul Moseley, co-ordinator of Gifted and Talented Disability Sport at the English Federation for Disability Sport, says more resources should be put into programmes that "help spot and nurture the sporting talent of disabled youngsters in school and further this through community sport".

The Gifted and Talented scheme is a joint venture between the Department for Education and Skills and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. It forms part of the

'It's so difficult to break into disability sport because, for example, wheelchairs cost £2,000 to £3,000. It's not like getting a pair of trainers.'

PE school sport and club links strategy and disabled sport was integrated within the scheme a year after its 2002 launch.

Mr Moseley says: "We need to get more schools involved in the scheme and more guidance given to schools, with those that are doing it well leading by example."

July saw the launch of a new lottery scratch card, Go for Gold, which is expected to raise £750 million for the Olympic Games by 2012. With the total

'It is not just about nurturing talent. The knock-on benefits of sport are far-reaching for all who participate'

budget for hosting the games set at £2,375 billion, questions will be asked about how much of this money will be spent on the development of athletes, including those who are disabled.

A spokeswoman for London 2012 says: "It has not yet been decided how this money will be spent, but UK Sport and Sport England will no doubt be involved in deciding this."

The British Paralympic



The present and future of disability sport: Tanni Grey Thompson trains with Louise Hunt, 14

Association (BPA) has received a grant of £2 million over the next three years to ensure development of athletes for the next Paralympic Games in Beijing in 2008, but funding for London remains undecided.

Mike Brace, chairman of the BPA, says: "Everything is still fairly embryonic at this stage. We understand we will be getting a percentage of funding, but how much remains undecided and they are still debating the overall amount."

Lindsey Bridgeman, athletics development officer at the Federation for Disability Sport Wales, remains optimistic about Britain's chances of success at 2012. Responsible for training 35 youngsters, aged between nine and 17, she says: "Every one of these children will be part of 2012 in some form or another."

She adds: "Five years ago Wales had 510 seniors and no young athletes. Now, by the time 2012 comes around, there will be a lot of talent to choose from."

At a recent training session visited by Dame Tanni Grey Thompson, the veteran Paralympian helped train 14-year-old wheelchair athlete Louise Hunt. Afterwards she said: "With London set to host the Paralympic Games in 2012, it is vital that we continue to encourage and engage more children in sport."

"It is not just about nurturing talent. The knock-on benefits of sport are far-reaching for all who participate, particularly for those in wheelchairs. Making new friends, becoming more self-confident and fit and healthy are all by-products of getting involved in sport."

EYES TO THE FUTURE: HARRI JENKINS

"I'm nine years old, I have cerebral palsy and I'm a wheelchair athlete. I attend the Junior Talent Academy at University Wales Institute in Cardiff, where I practice wheelchair racing and throwing events. I also attend a disability multisports club, go quad-biking and swim for the Swansea Stingrays."

"I'll be 16 when the Olympics are held in London so I'm not sure if I'll be old or good enough to compete, but my aim is to be in the British



squad. London winning the bid has given me a focus. I know I have to train much harder now. I do a mile at least once a week and three sessions of sprint training. I have to believe that I stand a good chance of getting into the team or I'll never do it."

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ILLUSTRATIONS: CLARE CURTIS

Letters to the Editor

Send your letters to the acting editor Sarah Hobson, Disability Now, 6 Market Road, London N7 9PW, minicom: 020 7619 7332, fax: 020 7619 7331, e-mail: editor@disabilitynow.org.uk

Choice in education

Following July's article "rights fear over UN disability charter", readers should know about a related issue that is important to the World Blind Union (WBU).

In New York in August, WBU delegates attended a committee meeting on the United Nations Convention to Promote and Protect the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities.

Our key focus was draft

Article 17, on education. The WBU, with the World Federation of the Deaf and the World Federation of the Deafblind, are only too aware that blind, deaf and deafblind people often feel excluded despite attending mainstream, "inclusive" schools, because of insufficient expertise or resources to cater for their particular communication, cultural or social requirements.

The debate was lengthy and

impassioned, but the chair ruled that the general consensus was in favour of provision of a choice of educational settings for this group.

We fully support effective inclusion of disabled people, but urge those working for disability rights to support our right to choose to be educated in settings most appropriate to our educational requirements. **Tony Aston, WBU delegate at the UN Convention**

Why access all areas is a myth

Following your access reviews of concerts last month, I write with concern about the way disabled people are treated at concerts.

My daughter, a wheelchair user, has been to some Will Young concerts recently. Sometimes she and other disabled people were treated

with respect, but at Southampton she was made to feel embarrassed by security staff and during the last gig at Tattenhall Park, she was upset when she was verbally abused by non-disabled people. Security staff should be trained on how to treat and where to

place disabled concert-goers – and they should not be placed at the back or behind pillars.

We are all concerned about access to buildings. I hope disability rights organisations will also press for improvements at venues and events.

Sarah Williams, by email

London feedback

I was extremely angry to find my words appallingly twisted in your article "Left with no information: disabled people on 7 July". I expect better from *Disability Now*.

I gave a lengthy interview, discussing Transport for London's (TfL) response to the terrorist attacks and long-term strategies for improving accessibility on transport networks. My comments were taken completely out of context. It is absolutely untrue that underground staff "have a huge amount of catching up to do" when it comes to emergency strategies for disabled people.

In the words of the managing directors of London Underground and London Buses, we should be grateful to staff who "did extraordinary things as part of their ordinary work". This is not to say procedures can't be improved, and I ask for feedback on how emergency strategies should be improved. But readers wanting to respond will find it difficult given the contact details at the end of the piece were incomplete. This carelessness was unhelpful to readers and TfL staff who

want to improve services.

My final disappointment was that the article insinuated I did not know about TfL staff's disability training; already more than 20,000 front line staff have had disability equality training.

Bryan Heiser, special advisor on disability, Transport for London board.

• To provide feedback to TfL, head your communication "Disabled people – 7/7". For comments about the Underground, use the email feedback form at www.tfl.gov.uk/tube/contacts/form.asp, tel: 0845 330 9880 (8am-8pm Monday-Friday), textphone: 020 7918 3500 (8am-8pm Monday to Friday), fax: 020 7918 4093, or write to Customer Service Centre, London Underground, 55 Broadway, London SW1H 0BD. For buses, email: customerservices@tfl-buses.co.uk, tel: 0845 300 7000 (8am-8pm Monday to Friday), textphone: 020 7918 4435 (8am-8pm Monday to Friday), fax: 020 7918 3999, or write to Customer Services Department, London Buses, 172 Buckingham Palace Road, London SW1W 9TN.

Standard ticket to ride

In your July issue, you informed readers of some of the attractions of the Brecks region in Norfolk and Suffolk. They may like to know about the Brecks Bus. It is a demand-responsive service only, at the price of a standard bus fare.

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Julian Turner, senior community transport officer, Suffolk county council

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back chat

● The *Daily Star* reports that football star Kieron Dyer has twice parked in disabled parking bays at his local cinema in North Tyneside. The Newcastle player was spotted on both occasions by Gary Lee, who has a spinal injury. Gary says he challenged Kieron, but he and his girlfriend walked away.

● Another celebrity under fire has been TV presenter and Edinburgh fringe comedian Jim Bowen. On hearing about a planned Channel 4 show involving Jim using "dwarfs" as curling stones, disabled Fringe stars asked C4 to rethink its broadcast. After complaints from *Abnormally Funny People* comedian Simon Minty, Jim apologised and said even he had reservations during filming. Agnes Fletcher, from the Disability Rights

Commission, said: "C4 have produced some great comedy programmes in the past where disabled people threw the comedic punches. That's what they ought to be producing – not shabby material, which even the presenter questions."

● Meanwhile, in America, a celebrity with restricted growth has hit the headlines for admitting he lied about starring in the original *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* as an Oompa Loompa. Ezzy Dame was told by his agent to lie on his CV to get more work. It's unlikely any of the Oompa Loompas from the current remake will lie about their part, as the producers have digitally repeated the image of just one actor. DN wonders how much money they saved...

Teen spirit



Chloe McKee goes clubbing in hot Ayr

On Saturday my friend Fiona and I went for a night out in Ayr, the biggest town in our area. I use a wheelchair and she doesn't.

There are no wheelchair accessible buses in the evening from our village to Ayr, so my mum drove us in. Once there, we faced our first challenge of the night, finding a pavement low enough to allow my van lift to let me down. Fortunately, there was a suitable pavement next to our first port of call, The Four Cats pub.

Some people have trouble with bouncers but I don't. They were very helpful, opening the side door for me, as the main door had two steps up. It was crowded inside, but we managed to find a table next to the DJ. We got some drinks, then some flyers for cheap entrance to the nearby club.

My next challenge involved accessing the loo. Sadly, we had to battle our way through a pile of spare chairs to get in and had I been alone, I would not have been able to move them. After this, we struggled through the pub to the club next door.

Again, the bouncers were great. They called us to come in first and there were ramps all the way in. The place was packed so I had to be aware of where I was going in case I tripped someone up.

I had a few more drinks, then it was off to the toilet again – this time, via the bar, where the key was stored. Fortunately, this toilet was chair free and simple to get into, although Fiona told me there were nice soaps and mints in the ladies (there were none in the disabled loo).

On leaving, a bouncer got us our jackets and let us out before the hordes. We reached the hotel where our pre-booked taxi was picking us up and we arrived home by 4am, both exhausted after a good night out. I know you don't hear it said very much, but let's hear it for the bouncers!

• DN goes pubbing: pp. 20-21

Glad to be back

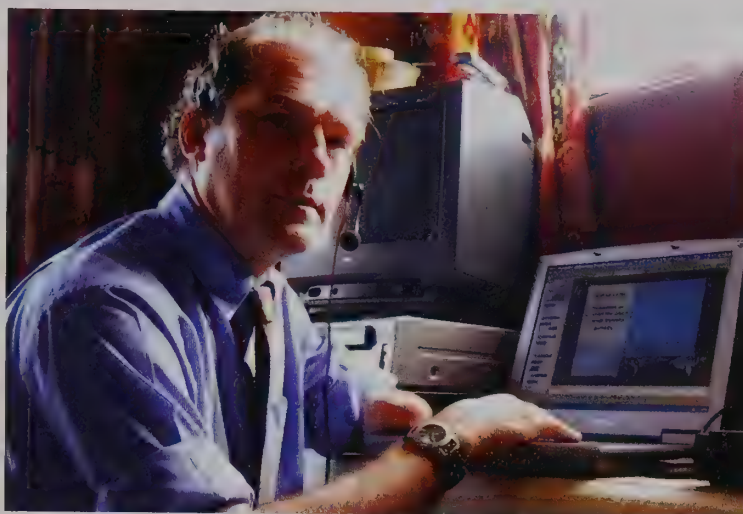
Last month in *DN*, we reported fears that the future of London's leading organisation for disabled people, GLAD, was in doubt. Here, Graham Clarke and Trish Pashley from the organisation argue that on the contrary, it is busier than ever

Greater London Action on Disability (GLAD) has been undergoing a transformation during the last year.

In 2004, an independent review examined the structure of GLAD and, as a result, our executive decided on a dynamic way forward. This was confirmed in May. Since then, the team has been working to build the mechanisms needed to take a professional GLAD into the 21st century.

We plan to work with all the disability borough organisations and strategic policy and planning bodies in London. We will also work with individual GLAD members, disability groups that represent people with more than one area of discrimination, impairment-specific groups, pan-London groups and other marginalised and oppressed communities.

We need to separate the running of GLAD from its role in ensuring the representation of disabled people. To do this, we have set up a new Pan London Strategic Disability Authority (PLSDA), to provide a truly representative way for disabled Londoners to respond to policy and development change.



Graham Clarke: GLAD will be "a dynamic force to be reckoned with"

Thanks to funding from the London Development Agency (LDA), we will carry out research with all the borough organisations and our disabled members. This will offer the basis for next year's work. We are also building a new, fully accessible website that will develop links between disability groups, individual members, strategic partners and funders.

The PLSDA is an exciting new strategy for GLAD and comes at a time of great opportunity for the disability movement. We need to have a strong influence on all public bodies, including local and national government, whose

services and practices affect the lives of disabled Londoners.

The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 creates a duty on all public bodies to help eliminate discrimination and harassment of disabled people, and promote equality of opportunity. All public bodies will have to develop Disability Equality Action plans, and report on their progress every year. They will need to involve disabled people in this work.

The PLSDA will provide London's disability movement with a strong voice, influencing policy makers at the heart of many of the systems which

have historically excluded us.

It will develop and promote best practice on disability issues, provide a way of consulting effectively with disabled people, promote networking, continue the fight for fully enforceable civil rights, and create a democratic and accountable structure.

Although the PLSDA will primarily be a "virtual network", we intend to use it to work closely with strategic agencies to help them improve their effectiveness at consulting with disabled people and to try to ensure that disabled people are no longer hit by 250-page documents, in inaccessible formats, with only one week to reply. GLAD will also develop a support network for trainers and consultants, to raise their standards and increase the consistency of messages on disability issues and best practice.

So, far from its existence being "under threat" (*DN August*), GLAD is, with the support of its members, funders and stakeholders, set to become a dynamic force to be reckoned with.

• Graham Clarke is strategic director of GLAD and Trish Pashley is its chief executive

Candid Kate



It's the summer holidays. Yay! At least, it's supposed to be the summer holidays, even though grey clouds dominate the skies for miles and miles.

Also, aren't summer holidays meant to be a rest from work? If they are, then things have gone seriously wrong in my world. Fate has decided I should be busy, and has given me a nine to five job's worth of things to get done. (Today, I have to research modern heroes for Haringey Shed Theatre, edit 11 hours of video footage down to five minutes for 1Voice, and write this column.)

Being the stubborn and not-completely-wise young lady that I am, I find myself going to bed too late and as a consequence, I get to start work at my computer next day between noon and two, completely missing that mythical part of the day known as morning. My time management skills are clearly lacking something (or everything).

What's more, I use personal assistants (PAs) to enable me to do anything. While earlier this year I couldn't find a PA for love nor money, as mine are mostly university students, I now have five of them wanting as many hours as possible. So on top of all my work – not to mention programming sweet nothings and calling a certain "other" talker-user – I have to try fitting all five PAs into my schedule.

Something tells me I need to learn to cope with adult life. Or am I just proving that disabled young people can be typical disorganised students?

• Kate Caryer is a student at the University of East London



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Taking on the doctors

Leslie Burke's high-profile 'right to life' court battle against the medical profession has made him an unlikely champion for disabled people. Priya Kotecha meets him

When Leslie Burke was diagnosed with cerebellar ataxia at the age of 23, he was told he had only 15 years to live. But the doctors were wrong, and last February, more than 21 years after his diagnosis, he made the news by launching a landmark "right to life" case, seeking a judicial review against guidance that allows doctors to withdraw artificial nutrition and hydration.

Leslie argues that the General Medical Council [GMC] guidance* discriminates against people who are unable to voice their wishes, which may affect him as his condition progresses.

Doctors have argued that changes to the guidance might force them to offer "futile treatments" to seriously ill patients. They say that because resources are limited in the health service, if life-prolonging treatments are demanded by more people, others, who are less ill but would benefit from treatment,

might miss out.

But Leslie is not confident that doctors will meet his needs and those of other disabled people. He says his experience of the medical profession, and the fact that he is still alive – despite his prognosis 21 years ago – has proved to him that "medicine is an imprecise science".

At first, Leslie recalls: "I wasn't told how rare or common my condition was or if there was a support group. I didn't have a chance to talk about it and I wasn't offered counselling. Instead I was left on my own and was extremely

'I wasn't told how rare my condition was or if there was a support group. I was left on my own and was extremely angry with doctors'

angry with doctors, I think part of that anger and part of the realisation that doctors are not superhuman, has had an influence on my determination



Time out: After his court battles, Leslie is happy to enjoy 'getting on with life'

to take this case forward."

He is concerned that the GMC guidance will impact on the way he is treated in 20 years time, when he may become unable to speak or swallow. He will then rely on doctors to keep him alive through artificial means. This is classed as treatment and, under the current GMC guidance, doctors would have the choice to withdraw it.

He says the guidance, which states that "if specific treatment is requested which, in your

considered view is clinically inappropriate, you are not legally or ethically bound to provide it" is "unfair and plain wrong". And he complains that, in contrary cases – where the patient refuses treatment – doctors' guidance says they "are bound to respect" requests "even where complying with the decision will lead to the patient's death".

Most of all, Leslie questions why, when a patient demands life-prolonging treatment, the GMC guidance gives doctors, rather than the patient, "the final say".

"I don't want someone who doesn't know about my life making judgments about me and deciding that it would be in my best interests to have food and water to be withdrawn," he says. "It would be much more painful for me to die of starvation and thirst for two to three weeks, and not humane at all in this modern, first-world country."

Although Leslie is aware that "advance directives" offer patients a safeguard to ensure their wishes are respected by doctors, he believes many people are either unaware of their existence or haven't got round to writing one.

Eighteen months after Leslie began his legal battle, he has been told that he has lost. After a victory in the High Court last year, the GMC appealed and the Court of Appeal has backed the doctors.

"I was ecstatic when I won the judicial review," he says, "because it meant I wouldn't need to make an advance directive. I wouldn't need anything done specifically for me. My guarantee would be in the revised guidelines – not only for me and my brother,

WHO IS HE?

Leslie Burke, 45, lives in Lancaster with his mum and brother Robert, who also has cerebella ataxia. He left his job as a postman when he was diagnosed in 1983, but has been busy since, taking several computer courses, learning Spanish and helping set up the Lancaster Disablement and Support Centre (DISC).

but for anyone else."

He was "shocked" when the GMC did not accept the decision. "It's disappointing that the GMC could not see the groundswell of opinion from the disabled community that the guidelines are wrong."

Leslie admits he has found his court battle stressful. "Being told your future prognosis, what is going to happen to you year by year, was upsetting and hard to take." But he is determined to pursue the case further and, although he has been refused permission to go to the House of Lords, he is able to petition the house himself. He also hopes continued pressure from disability groups and the Disability Rights Commission will make the GMC review their guidelines.

But right now, Leslie is concentrating on "getting on with life". "I've got a girlfriend, I do voluntary work, so I contribute to the local community, and I'm on direct payments so I'm out and about visiting friends, and going out. Life at the moment is wonderful and there's no way I want that to be curtailed."

* *Withholding and Withdrawing Life-prolonging Treatments: Good Practice in Decision-making*, www.gmc-uk.org or tel: 0845 357 3456







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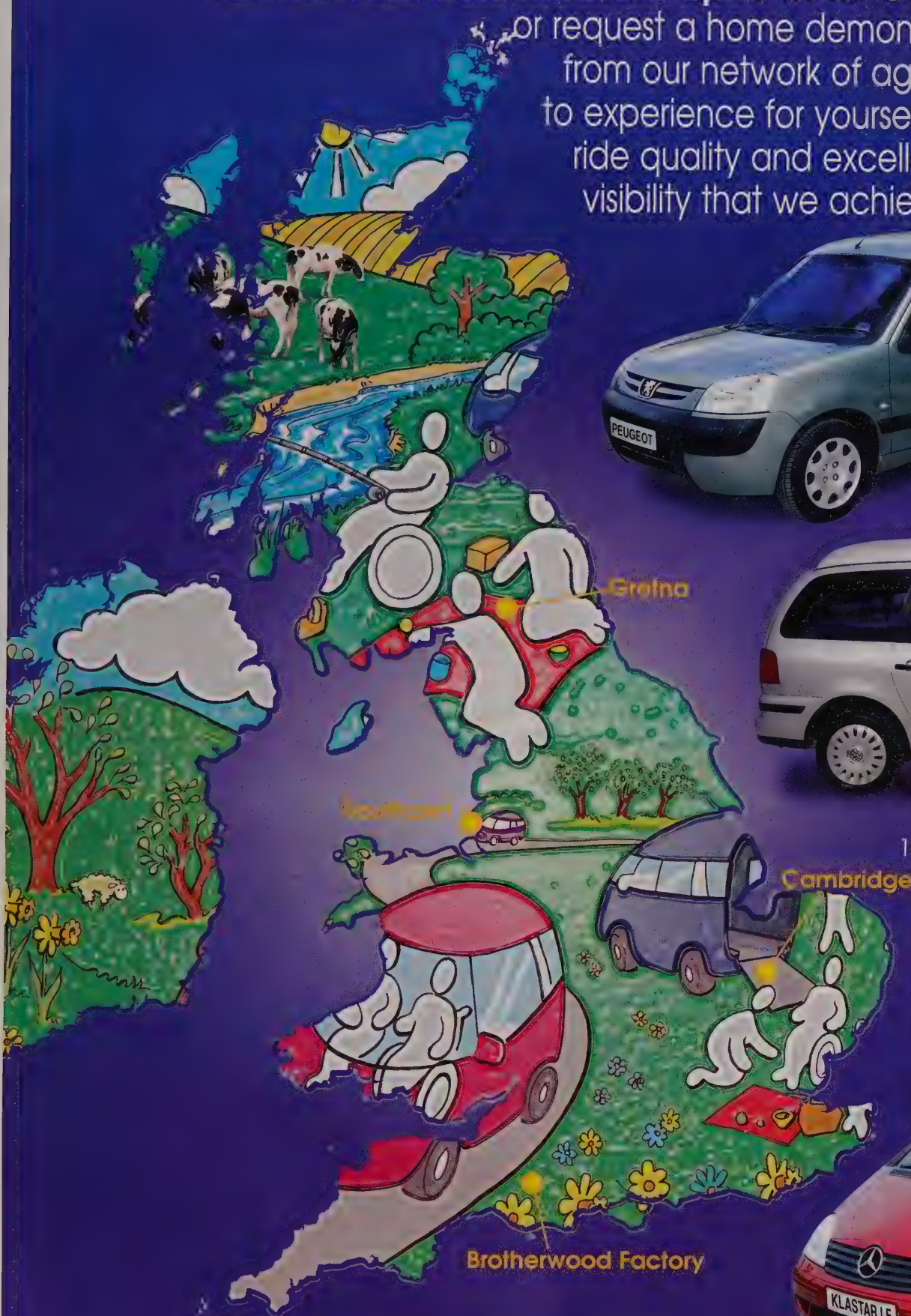


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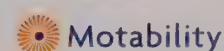
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Drinking to access

This month, a year on since new access laws made it illegal to discriminate against disabled people in bars, we embarked on a series of pub crawls around the UK to see whether drinking is more inclusive than ever. Don't let it be said we don't work hard for you...

LONDON

It is almost a year since the law required that disabled people should be able to drink beers without barriers, so a pub crawl around one of the most popular areas of London, Covent Garden, should have been easy.

With our entertainment bible – the *Time Out London Bars, Pubs and Clubs 2005/6* – in hand, the DN team began planning the evening.

The Covent Garden chapter has 23 recommendations, but the guide says only three have accessible toilets, so we got on the phone to check.

Our research found that wheelchair users can get in the door at 12 of the 23 recommended bars and pubs, but only five of those have accessible toilet facilities.

Responses on the phone ranged from a barman hanging up saying he did not have time to discuss access

(the Opera Tavern) to the helpful manager of a totally inaccessible pub offering to lift punters where necessary (Punch and Judy). With several confused responses, DN did not bother to ask about other forms of access such as lighting and hearing loops.

Then it was time to start drinking. The team consisted of DN's acting editor Sarah Hobson, design and production editor Jamie Trounce, web manager David Felton and marketing executive Fiona Mitchell, who were joined by Sarah Stanwix and Peter

Gardiner, who both work for the Spinal Injuries Association. Cat Hudson, Scope's Time To Get Equal manager, came along later in the evening.

With the London bombings still affecting transport, the team was unable to use the nearest tube station, Covent Garden, so bussed it from the offices at Caledonian Road to the nearby Strand. Sarah and Peter joined us by car and taxi.

The Langley, 5 Langley Street,
tel: 020 7836 5005 or go to
www.thelangley.co.uk

This basement bar – a warren of

dimly lit rooms that may not ideal for people with visual impairments or those who lip-read – targets trendy 20-somethings on a budget, and with great happy hour prices, it suited the pockets of our team members, who all work in charity. But before we could get to the two-for-one Cosmopolitans, the lift had to be cleared of

Sarah at the lift in The Langley (left) and (below) goods in the user-unfriendly lift



Booze crew: Peter samples the cocktails in Bunker

boxes for Sarah. There was no bell to call for assistance and the door catch was too stiff for her to operate, although an engineer was due to fix it, we were told. That said, staff members were helpful and handed over a RADAR key straight away. Peter liked the Langley, but pointed out that the tables were a bit low for him to eat at and as the accessible toilet had not been used in a while it smelt.

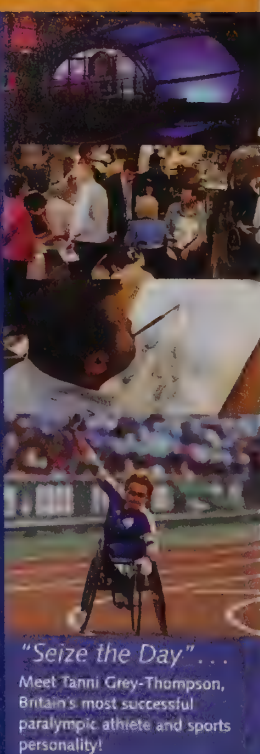
Bunker, 41 Earlham Street,
tel: 020 7240 0606 or see
www.bunkerbar.com
Just around the corner, the

Bunker is another basement bar. Wheelchair users enter it from the shopping centre lift next door, which was fine on the way in, but at 8pm on the way out it took ages to find a security guard to turn the lift back on. Despite the bar being spacious, tables were close together and some were difficult to get to. The tables were also so large that lip-reading across one was challenging, and while the lighting was bright, this took away some atmosphere. With minimal but drab design, and clanking

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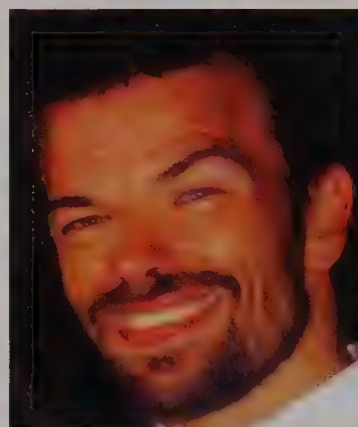
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EDINBURGH

On a lively Friday afternoon in Edinburgh's city centre I met my friend Elspeth at the Hard Rock Café in George Street to find out how accessible the city's pubs really are. We both find stairs and steps difficult.

Once inside we headed for the bar. With only high bar stools we asked to sit in the restaurant area and just have drinks. This was refused until managers saw us trying to climb onto the bar stools. But getting to a table was also difficult as they were so tightly packed and the path to the accessible toilet was blocked by chairs, although our waitress was friendly and helpful. There was no sign of menus in alternative formats and it got very noisy, which could be a barrier to someone with a speech or hearing impairment.

We then visited the Auld Hundredth, a small pub which would have been inaccessible for wheelchair users as there are stairs at the entrance, and



no banister. Once inside, the tables were spaced out, easy to get to and there was a good contrast of colour in the room. Service was also welcoming; there were straws available and the barman was happy to carry our affordable drinks over to our table when we asked.

More accessible at face value was the Rose Street Brewery. There was a ramp at the entrance, but there the access

ticks ended, unfortunately. The bar was two steps down and the staff were not particularly friendly or helpful.

Back to George Street and The Standing Order, a pub and restaurant owned by Wetherspoons. As with most pubs owned by the chain, there was an accessible entrance, albeit at the back of the building, and an accessible toilet. Queueing for a table was a pain, so if there was a group going, it is worth going early.

En route home, we considered a last drink in All Bar One, across the road, but it appeared to be totally inaccessible. There were no seats at a level we could use and as no staff came to help us we decided not to give them our custom and left thirsty. **Grant Douglas (pictured) and Elspeth Ferguson**

glasses and dishes, the bar felt more like a school canteen, with the indifferent staff taking on the roles of indifferent dinner ladies. There was no accessible toilet so Peter had to venture outside to find the one in the shopping centre. Drinks and food prices were reasonable.

Cross Keys, 31 Endell Street,
tel: 020 7836 5185

Two drinks down, it was time to head for old-fashioned charm and the nearby Cross Keys delivered plenty of this. It was busy, so sitting at the outside picnic tables was impossible but a table inside soon became free and was surprisingly spacious.

The toilets are up a set of ancient, narrow stairs, but when Peter asked about them, staff immediately phoned through to the Octave Jazz bar next door. As soon as he went round staff there showed him to its accessible toilet. Peter said it looked like a great accessible place if you want to splash out for a night.

To finish off the evening, we wanted to try a "totally accessible" bar, but the nearest and most affordable was the Brazilian dance spot Guanabara, for which none of us had the energy, so we headed to Porterhouse.



streets of Covent Garden market – there really should be a flat path around it by now. The Porterhouse is accessible, but there are no signs at the stepped front entrance for the level side door, although the bouncers immediately let Sarah and Peter know where they needed to go and where the accessible toilet was.

Inside, only part of the ground floor was wheelchair accessible, as there were steps to other raised areas. With a live band and many unusual beers, the Porterhouse did not lack atmosphere, but it was noisy. Cat also said she was disappointed when she got "scowls from the staff for using the accessible toilet, which is not uncommon when I am not using my chair... this says a lot about people's lack of disability awareness".

Had we been tourists in London without prior knowledge of where to go, getting a drink and a bite to eat would have been a major problem; not enough has been done to improve physical access since the Disability Discrimination Act Part 3 was enforced last October. But staff attitudes are improving, so let's hope bar owners can begin to follow their example.

As the DN pub crawl was in full swing, across London reader Simon Stevens was facing more direct challenges when buying a drink.

Having missed his train at Euston station, Simon made his way to The Britannia bar to order a whisky and coke.

Although he had visited the bar many times before, he says the head barman told his junior not to serve him and an argument began. Only when the manager was called did the situation improve. He was eventually given a free drink.

He says: "For me, it was just another twist and turn in what is my life as an active disabled person but for once discrimination lost and a disabled person won."

Porterhouse, 21-22 Maiden Lane, tel: 020 7836 9931

Porterhouse was a 15 minute walk/wheel, across the cobbled

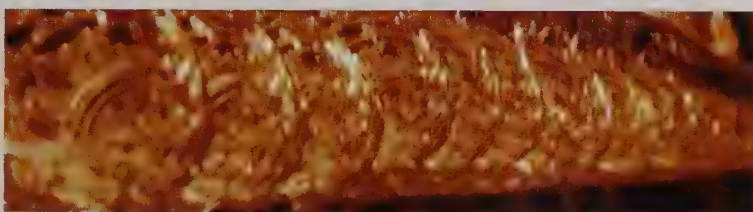
BELFAST

Many drinking venues in Belfast have been refurbished recently so there should have been ample opportunity to address access issues. We were sent out to test the pubs – all in the name of research, of course.

The Odyssey Arena entertainment complex – situated about ten minutes from the centre – was perhaps the most accessible. The Odyssey's Basin area, which houses food outlets and a range of pubs, was completely accessible. Parking nearby was easy.

In town, one of the best venues was Auntie Annie's. This lively venue, on Dublin Road, has a wide, level-access entrance and plenty of room to move around. The toilets were fully accessible. The Northern Whig, on Warring Street, was also fully accessible, and served food.

There were challenges, however, at other places we tried. At Robinson's Bar, on Great Victoria Street, there were accessible entrances at the front and back, but no accessible toilets. Also it can become very crowded from early in the evening at the weekend. There were also problems with accessing toilets



Raise a glass: (from left) Fred Young, Gary McGladdery, Samuel Blair and Alan Scott

at Benedicts, on Shaftesbury Square, but on the plus side some areas of the bar were at a reasonably low level.

At Lavery's Bar, Bradbury Place, there were heavy doors at the entrance and it was not particularly easy to move around inside.

Last on our list for the night was The Europa Hotel, Great Victoria Street. Both bars in the hotel are fully accessible, serve food and the staff were willing to order taxis late at night. Also, the hotel is near one of the city's main rail and bus

stations where a taxi can be easily accessed safely.

Overall, we found that the majority of premises were accessible to enter and had helpful staff, but there were issues with accessible toilets, raised seating areas and lighting. And, as the city became more crowded, it became increasingly difficult to negotiate through the crowds.

We found hotels to be a good option late at night as they are less crowded and transport home can be found more easily.



CARDIFF

What a night. We crawled round ten bars in seven hours. The majority were accessible, but none of them were ideal.

The night started off slowly – my usual drinking buddies couldn't make it. Instead, I found myself on the town with two very attractive young ladies, Sarah and Lynne; what a chore.

Our first bar was Henry's. It has disabled access, but only via a fire escape and the badly maintained pavement outside made it difficult to get in. Once in, it wasn't too bad to get around, but their disabled toilet was behind an outer door that was locked, so I had to ask staff to open it. They were, however, very helpful.

From there we went onto Ha Ha's, which had a good, flat entrance. The toilets were in good order with a RADAR key lock. Lighting seemed to be the only problem; I could imagine it being difficult for people who are visually impaired.

Next we went to the Slug and Lettuce, which had easy access and internal ramps. Sadly, the accessible toilet had no lock, so anyone could use it. It was dirty with vomit all over the floor. The text on the food



menu was also very small.

We then went on to seven more bars; Flares, Is it, Bar Cuba, Life, The Toad, Zync and Copa. All had their problems. If they weren't too dark then they had problems with their toilets. There were also a number of bars I would like to have tried, which I thought should have been accessible because they were very new, but stairs at the entrance put me off.

Even though there is now legislation that should be helping to improve access in Cardiff bars and restaurants, not enough has been done. My only pleasant surprise was the staff; they were helpful everywhere and spoke to me as an equal. Despite the problems, Cardiff is still a great night out for everyone. Top drinks were in Is it and Flares.

Tony Stephenson (pictured)
* For Tony's full access analysis of all ten bars, go to www.disabilitynow.org.uk

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Motability



Tate and Trocadero

In the last of our summer holiday series looking at access in the UK's capital cities, Caroline Payne and her son Samuel check out London

When my 13-year-old son Samuel and I decided to go for a day out in London, as usual, we could not agree on exactly where to go. I wanted to visit Tate Modern gallery and he wanted to head for the Trocadero shopping and entertainment centre.

Although daunted at the prospect of such a busy day – my arthritis and cerebral palsy mean it is difficult and tiring to stand for long periods of time or walk far – we tried both. Also, Samuel will not use the tube since the London bombings and so the number of changes during our journey was greater than if we had travelled underground.

We took two buses, both of which had ramps that worked but we had to wait quite a while for each and the first bus was packed so I did not get a seat.

The second bus not only had a ramp but also visual and audio information about the journey.

We eventually arrived at Southwark Street near the gallery. On arrival I noticed Tate Modern only has ten disabled parking bays and you have to book them beforehand.



Samuel and Caroline at Trocadero

When you enter the gallery you go down a quite steep marble ramp, which may be difficult for wheelchair. I had never been to Tate Modern before and really enjoyed it, but I found walking around exhausting. The gallery does provide wheelchairs but again you have to book them beforehand. I wish I had done so.

There were lifts to each floor and stairs but you had to wait for the lift for a long time and there was nowhere to sit while waiting. Also, the lift did not have any indicator to tell you what floor it was on. There



Tate Modern

were benches to sit on in every other room but because they were backless they made my back hurt.

There were white wires around the exhibits just above ground level and I wondered whether someone with a visual impairment would see them. Also, the signage, particularly next to the pieces of art, was very small. Although there were electronic guides, they were

not available for the temporary exhibitions. I only managed to get around the ground and first floors as my back hurt too much after that and I had to go and sit down for a while. Despite the above, I really enjoyed the gallery, especially some of the sculptures.

We then went to lunch at the Gourmet Pizza Company, which is my son's favourite restaurant. Unfortunately, it is totally inaccessible. I nearly didn't go there but decided I would and take the opportunity to point out what they need to do about access; staff were polite but did not seem to understand my complaints.

Then we took two more buses to get to the Trocadero, but waited a while for each. The buses were both very crowded and although they both had ramps, I only saw one in operation.

We got to the Trocadero and I was exhausted. The centre has limited accessibility. There are accessible lifts and toilets, and a lot of the shops are accessible, but there is nowhere to sit and rest apart from a few restaurants and the bowling alley. In the arcade there are lots of steps going from one level to another but no lifts or ramps and lighting is poor.

Overall, we had a really good but exhausting day and I think next time I would only go to one place instead of two.

● Tate Modern, tel: 020 7887 8888, www.tate.org.uk/modern
Trocadero, tel: 09068 881 100, www.londontrocadero.com

LONDON INFO

Dial-a-Ride provides a door-to-door accessible transport service for London residents. There is a multi-lingual booking service, and prices start at 60p. Contact Transport for London, tel: 020 7241 7455, www.tfl.gov.uk/dial-a-ride

Sailability for London is part of RYA Sailability's UK-wide provision of accessible boating experiences. There are clubs across London, including Croydon, Islington, Wimbledon and the Docklands. Sailability also provides information, advice and support on sailing and facilities. Tel: 0845 345 0403, www.rya.org.uk/sailability



The London Canal Museum on Battlebridge Basin charts the history of London's canals. Accessible canal boat trips that take you to and from the museum are available. The museum is largely accessible, and has induction loops and accessible toilets. Tel: 0207 713 0836, www.canalmuseum.org.uk

To escape from the city, visit Kenwood House in Hampstead. The neoclassical house has works by artists including Rembrandt, and is mostly accessible.



There are butterflies and bats in the garden, and the lake setting provides a perfect picnic spot. There are also events for children. There will be a photography day on 7 September where you can learn to take pictures of historic properties (£40). Tel: 020 8348 1286, www.english-heritage.org.uk

Performances at the open air theatre in Regent's Park continue to mid-September. This season's shows include Twelfth Night. The venue is accessible, including wheelchair spaces and a loop system for hearing impaired visitors. Guide dogs are welcome, some performances are sign language interpreted and there is a large print version of the brochure. Tel: 08700 601811, www.openairtheatre.org

● Find out more at www.visitlondon.com

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Sex talk silenced

When sex education is considered to be a key part of the national curriculum, why are so many disabled youngsters still denied it? Elizabeth Choppin reports

Sex education is widely believed to be a key part of young people's schooling and a vital part of establishing a healthy sexual identity. Why is it then that so few disabled people have access to it?

In DN's sex survey this year, almost half of the 1,000 respondents said they had not received any form of sex education at school. Eighty four per cent were not given guidance specific to the needs of disabled people and many had been discouraged from the idea of sex altogether. As a result, confusion and negative self-image over sex and relationships were evident in almost all our survey responses.

Exactly who bears responsibility for excluding disabled people from in-depth sex education is difficult to know. Is it the government, is it schools themselves, be they mainstream or special, is it disability organisations and campaigners, or is it families and carers? The truth is that all parties bear responsibility.

Sian Davies, disability officer for the National Union of Students, is heading up a campaign, *The Body Beautiful and Sexually Proud*, to encourage more disabled university students into open discussions about sex and how to be safe. "There is a general feeling that they don't have the education they need and have a right to," she says, adding that she has encountered students who have asked how to have sex and who "had no clue how to engage in talking to people".

Despite DN's low figures on the number of people who have received sex education, a

spokeswoman for the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) stresses that the national curriculum requires a "basic minimum" of teaching, covering the biological aspects of reproduction.

Beyond that, she adds, schools are advised to have a regularly updated policy on teaching sex education. The content "should cover" subjects like HIV and AIDS, how to avoid unwanted sex and other basic factual information. But the government believes parents and teachers should decide what is taught.

Where does this leave disabled people whose parents and teachers often shy away from explaining the subject in a comprehensive

'Society still thinks that people like myself are not entitled to a sex life – even though my body is just like any other woman's inside'

and effective way?

Paul O'Connell, a researcher for the Rite Project, which recently interviewed 33 disabled adults on a range of issues including sexuality, says: "In special needs schools it [sex education] is definitely lacking. In mainstream schools it is there, but to what degree is questionable. Mostly, disability didn't figure in it and it was a bit of an uncomfortable situation for students and teachers. My sense from people was that the teachers didn't know how to broach it."

A female Rite Project interviewee, 31, says that the only sex education she ever

received was from her mother. They discussed menstruation and "becoming a woman" but she has never had a conversation about being with a sexual partner. "I cannot have a normal relationship because I do not have the knowledge of sex," she says.

"My main problem is that if I go on a date, most men expect more than having dinner and I don't feel I have enough knowledge of anything."

DN reader Amanda Illtie says: "Society still thinks that people like myself are not entitled to a sex life. I find this very frustrating as my body is just like any other woman's inside."

She adds that her first experience at a gynaecologist contributed to a fear of sex because she felt the doctor did not have proper training to be sensitive to her needs. She has been haunted ever since.

She would like to see specialised clinics across the country where disabled people can confront any concerns they have about sex. "Such a clinic should provide a service where disabled people can be taught to make love physically by a specially trained sex therapist who is vetted," she says.

Another factor is that even though groups like the Family Planning Association, the National Autistic Society and the Sex Education Forum have put out sex education guidance for disabled people and professionals, few people know they exist. Dr Tom Shakespeare, one of the authors of *The Sexual Politics of Disability*, says more specific information must be made available.



Class split: The quality of sex education available to disabled and non-disabled children is starkly different

"There aren't enough initiatives, and I don't think the ones that exist have been mainstreamed," he says. "Sex and relationships is an area most people feel insecure and uncertain about, particularly disabled people."

He says there is "no excuse" to ignore disabled people when educating youngsters.

"I think a lot of parents are anxious about their disabled child being sexually active, so they think it's better for them not to know about it."

"There is no doubt that

they can be vulnerable and we should be aware of that," he adds, stressing the importance of teaching those with learning difficulties to have appropriate and safe sexual relationships.

He concludes: "We need to help people understand what is normal behaviour in this area and help them negotiate these situations. We need to empower people."

• For more, see DN's *Let's Talk about Sex* archive at: www.disabilitynow.org.uk/timetotalksex

Disability Rights Commission

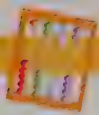
Don't let access affect your success

From September 2005, disabled students have new rights of access. Education providers will have to make 'reasonable adjustments' to their premises if there are physical



features that put disabled students or prospective students at a substantial disadvantage. To find out more please visit: www.drc-gb.org/education

Making rights a reality



Class education

DN asked Lord Andrew Adonis, education minister for schools, to comment on what the government is doing for disabled people in education and how they are handling the debate over specialist versus mainstream education.

When we talk about a world class education system and children's services that support every child to fulfil their potential, we mean every child.

For disabled children, it has been an important year.

We are taking forward the actions in our special education needs strategy, *Removing Barriers To Achievement*, which we launched last year. One of these actions is the DfES-funded national audit of low incidence needs, which will give us a better understanding of how such needs are met in different parts of the country and where the gaps are.

Among others, we are working with the Disability Rights Commission and the Council for Disabled Children, to provide practical support to early years settings, schools and local authorities to help implement the duties they now have under part 4 of the Disability Discrimination Act (1995). Our linked projects, including tools to help local authorities and schools review and revise their access strategies, and a resource bank of practical ideas to make

reasonable adjustments, are in their final stages.

We are working with 12 children's trust pathfinders focussing on disability and/or mental health services. They are commissioning services, such as early years and transition into school, strategically. They will fulfil the aims of *Every Child Matters* and deliver services that meet the standards highlighted in the National Service Framework for Children.

We will keep looking at innovation, including effective interventions for particular conditions, such as autism, long term ventilation and complex disability.

We have also witnessed the appointment of England's first Children's Commissioner, Professor Al Aynsley Green, who

will prove effective in championing disabled children.

Perhaps the greatest development this year has been the *Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People* report, released in January.

Effectively a white paper, this report sets out clear steps we will follow to remove the economic and social barriers for disabled people.

It highlights many longstanding issues, including that around 29 per cent of families with a



disabled child live in, or near, poverty. Bringing up a disabled child costs three times more than a non-disabled child and we found that families with disabled young people often lose the support they need as they enter adulthood. This isn't good enough and we are committed to change.

We will improve support for disabled children and their families in the early years. Through childcare, early education and early family support we believe we can make a big difference to the life chances of these children and their families. We can see this through the early support programme. The government's ten-year childcare strategy seeks to ensure disabled children, and their families, will have access to the full range of childcare options that are open to other families.

The government will establish a new Office for Disability Issues, informed by a national forum, to help make sure that we all work together on this and that we work within the wider agenda of getting rid of inequalities.

There will also be individual budget pilots to test new ways of giving more choice and control to young people and families with disabled children and a set of web-based frequently asked questions to help children's services and families understand better how they can use Direct Payments.

Our ambition is to improve outcomes for all children and young people, and to narrow

the gap in outcomes between those who do well and those who do not. Children and young people must be protected from harm and given the personalised learning, care and support needed to help them fulfil their potential.

The Children Act 2004 strengthens the legislative foundation for this and we will supply the support and leadership required to make a difference.



Tara Flood, head of external affairs at Scope, replies: "I welcome recent government initiatives that challenge the inequalities faced by disabled children. The government strategy on special educational needs (SEN), *Every Child Matters* and *Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People* are some of the main initiatives that recognise these inequalities.

"Scope believes that all children, disabled and non-disabled, have a right to live in their community and attend a mainstream school; a right which was reflected in the passing of the SEN and Disability Act 2001. Given the recent negative publicity about inclusive education, and as part of its Time to Get Equal campaign, Scope would like to see a renewed commitment from the government to inclusive education that tackles current disability attitudes.

"This commitment needs to be supported in a number of ways. Resources like health and social care services and funding should be available to develop capacity in mainstream schools.

Disability equality training should be an integral part of all teacher training so that SEN ceases to be a separate expertise within the education system.

Methods of assessing pupils and schools need to be challenged to reflect the progress that disabled children make and the progress schools make in meeting their rights.

"Above all, inclusion should not be abandoned as an ideal. Inclusive education should be welcomed as an opportunity to build a more inclusive society, based on equality for all."

Able and Disabled?

At University College Oxford we welcome applications from students with disabilities. We have a special fund which can be used to make appropriate provision for students with disabilities both during the admissions process and while studying at the College.

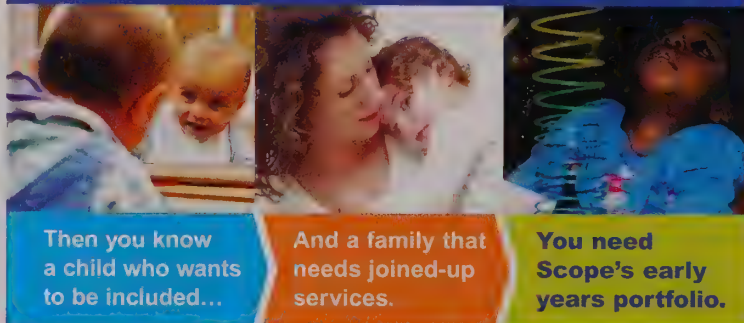
If you are interested in applying to University College, please tell us well in advance about the nature of your disability so that we can make arrangements to help you. If you would like to find out more about whether this fund can help you, please contact:

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Time for special thinking

The government's announcement of a radical review into Special Educational Needs will please many parents who remain reluctant to send their disabled children to mainstream schools. Priya Kotecha reports

The decision by MPs to launch an inquiry into Special Educational Needs (SEN) has provided the opportunity for campaigners to show the government once and for all what it needs to do to make inclusive education work.

The inquiry by the Education and Skills Committee follows the release of a report by Baroness Warnock, a key campaigner for educating disabled children in mainstream schools in the 1970s. In a U-turn that surprised many campaigners, she called for a "radical review" of the idea of inclusion. Her call added to the repeated demands by the Conservative party and other campaigners for an end to the closure of special schools.

David Lloyd, clerk for the new inquiry, said: "Given that Baroness Warnock has had a change of heart, we feel the need to re-examine this issue, to give us some clarity and objectivity on the matter."

The inquiry will look at resources, expert support and funding for SEN pupils in mainstream schools, the state-menting system, and examine different ways that education is provided for disabled children.

Since 2001, 70 of 1,309 special schools in England have been shut down. 32 of them have been schools for children with severe learning difficulties. The closures have increased pressure on parents to find a mainstream school that will offer the right support for their disabled child.

Suzanne Woods faced a battle when trying to enrol her disabled son Callum in the mainstream Lambeth City Academy. "If parents are going down the mainstream route, you've got to be reassured that you're getting the necessary support for your child," she said.

She added that many parents are put off because the process of trying to enrol a disabled child in a mainstream school is "woolly" and they are unaware of "who they're taking on", an issue she says the new inquiry must address.

For many like Callum, inclusion works well, but some parents believe their children are not catered for by current mainstream provision.



Thinking outside the box: The government must rethink SEN policy before children like Andrew and Michael (above) and Peter (right, with mum Michelle) can benefit from mainstream education

Michelle Harrison tried inclusion when she enrolled her son Peter into a mainstream primary school in Nottingham, which she said was "fantastic". But as soon as he turned 11 and transferred to a mainstream secondary school, she thinks "the gap became too wide". To top it all off, the school told her that parents of non-disabled children were complaining "about children like yours".

She says inclusion in theory

'I don't want to stop any parent from putting their child in mainstream, but at the same time I don't want to be stopped from putting my child in special school'

"is a good, well-meaning idea" but cannot work for every child.

She also believes that children with sensory or physical impairments find mainstream schooling easier than those with learning difficulties.

She welcomes the new inquiry, particularly the committee's promise to "address the

role of parents in decisions".

"I don't want to stop any parent from putting their child in mainstream," she says, "but at the same time I don't want to be stopped from putting my child in a special school."

Pro-inclusion supporters accept that mainstream schools do not fully cater for the needs of all disabled children. But Simone Aspis, parliamentary and campaigns officer for the British Council of Disabled People, says this is not because of the child's impairment. Instead, "it is due to the lack of resources and training which staff need in order to make inclusion a reality". She and other campaigners insist inclusion is the only way forward.

Jo Cameron, director of Parents for Inclusion, says many schools are managing their disabled pupils "very successfully". And Micheline Mason, director of the Alliance for Inclusive Education, adds: "The league tables, as well as evidence from health and social services, show that children do better in every



way when they are supported to remain in the heart of their family, their community and their wider society."

But with SEN budgets now going directly to schools instead of Local Education Authorities and the government cutting down on statements, parents take a greater risk by sending their children to a mainstream school, says Amanda Batten, of the National Autistic Society (NAS). "Where money is being delegated to the school and there's not enough, parents end up fighting with the school and this places a great strain on this important relationship."

Mother Dawn Hill says there need to be huge changes in the current system before she will even consider sending her

eight-year-old son Andrew, who has autism, to a mainstream school. Her older son Michael, who has Asperger's syndrome, attends the NAS Helen Allison School, a special school in Kent, and although he attends a mainstream school for maths lessons, Mrs Hill says mainstream education is not an option for Andrew until there are smaller classes of eight to ten pupils and comprehensive training on autism for all staff.

She says authorities need to "stop thinking about how to integrate a disabled child into mainstream" and start thinking about how to make mainstream schools more like special schools.

• For more information on the inquiry or to contribute see: www.parliament.uk

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"The Disability and Dyslexia Service has improved significantly since I first came to Brunel in 2002. Their response rate in providing specific support for my academic needs and their advice is impressive. It is a fast growing Service that will, hopefully become the best in Great Britain." Says Josef.



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For further information, please contact Brunel's Disability and Dyslexia Service:
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Fax: ++44 (0)1895 269767
Email: disability@brunel.ac.uk
Web: www.brunel.ac.uk/life/welfare/dis.bsp

The real class issue

There are more disabled people in colleges and universities than ever, but many still struggle to get the support they need, writes Elizabeth Choppin

Higher and further education has become increasingly accessible to disabled people in the past few years, but those with sensory impairments feel they are losing out. While physical access continues to improve, expanding the range of learning resources and support services is painfully slow.

A shortage of sign language interpreters, long waits for reading materials in accessible formats and non-inclusive teaching methods can pose huge hurdles for students with visual and hearing impairments as well as dyslexia.

Alan Hurst, a trustee of SKILL, the National Bureau for Students with Disabilities, says: "The nature of the challenge has changed. In the early days it was about getting disabled people through the door. Now it is about addressing their needs once they're inside," he says.

Impairments should be considered when curricula are being designed, he believes, and

teachers should consider more closely whether their methods exclude any students.

RNID education officer Stevie Mayhook says lecturers of deaf and hearing impaired students do not always understand how important it is to have notes in advance or why communication support workers (CSW) or note-takers are so vital.

"They [deaf students] are not asking to have an unfair advantage over hearing students by having materials in advance. It's only enabling them to have equal access when the class is in progress... this is part of the students' working methodology and is

RNID/PHILIP MEECH



'A' for access : Not only do signers cost a lot, but their importance is sometimes underestimated by tutors

other disabled students. Interpreters and CSWs are very expensive."

Ms Mayhook adds: "Under the Disability Discrimination

'In the early days it was about getting disabled people through the door. Now it is about addressing their needs once they're inside'

important," she says.

"Deaf students get Disability Student Allowance (DSA) but their costs are a lot higher than

Act (DDA), the university is required to make adjustments to meet students' needs, but because the students have an

allowance that is supposed to buy a lot of the support, there is a clash. Who is responsible and at what point is the university responsible? It's a muddled area."

A major challenge for blind and visually impaired students is getting course materials in accessible formats and in enough time to study them in depth. Often they face lengthy delays while a book is scanned, transcribed or taped.

The Sound, Sense and Vision Trust has started a campaign to ensure publishers provide texts in electronic format.

But Hugh Jones, copyright advisor for the Publisher's Association, says that a proper trust structure must be in place before digital files are handed over. "It is copyrighted material and there are good reasons why copyright is there – to protect authors, creators and publishers. If you give somebody a digital file, they can then make a cascade of further copies for other people. They could upload it on the net and make it available to everyone. So, not surprisingly, publishers are being cautious."

It is hoped that the DDA's duty on public bodies to promote disability equality, due to come into force in October, will make a difference to many students. Sian Davies, disability officer at the National Union of Students, says: "It will no longer be the responsibility of the student to pursue it. It will be up to the senior management of the institution, who will have to include it into the overall strategy."

The RNIB's assistant director for education, Kevin Connell, says the legislation should be able to remove the



SARAH DAVIDSON
psychology graduate,
University of Lancashire

"Life as a blind student is no picnic," says Sarah Davidson, who had to be "ten steps ahead" in order to keep up with her studies.

She wishes more digital files had been available while reading for her degree as she sometimes had to wait for up to fourteen weeks for a textbook to be scanned and edited. Often she had to miss out on current journals and periodicals.

"I will come away with a hard-won degree but so much of the university experience will have been denied to me due to the many constraints I have had in order to meet the deadlines so easily achieved by my sighted peers."

barriers that remain. "An increasing number of universities are willing to put material online, but then that raises all the issues about whether they are appropriately formatted and whether the systems are accessible using screen readers and access technology."

"People have rights, so they're looking for 100 per cent fulfilment of those rights. As opportunities increase, people's expectations increase as well... and quite rightly."

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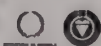
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Mainstream or not?

That's the question we asked three readers who have all opted for very different kinds of education



Dad Peter Brill writes:

I have just returned from a funeral; one of many for a peer of my 12-year-old daughter Josephine. So why, as a parent, would I choose to send my child to residential school for 42 weeks a year?

The answer is always the same, because at Craig-y-Parc, Cardiff, she has a quality of life and educational opportunities she could never have at home.

Josephine has cerebral palsy, quadriplegic spasticity and cortical blindness. Her physical and mental capacity to learn, and the times when she is most receptive, are at odds with mainstream or specialist day-based education.

We knew that a "waking hours" curriculum was essential if she was to get the most from her abilities and that there was a large, trained staff to provide it.

It is reassuring to phone the school outside normal hours and discover that Josephine has been out bowling, shopping or having aromatherapy. As a consequence, she is happier, more alert, more responsive and generally healthier than she has ever been; something we are able to celebrate when she is at home.

Total inclusion into mainstream education, and society, may be politically correct, and there are many who have seen the benefit and are campaigning for this, but I at least know that at Craig-y-Parc she has a quality of life, however long that may be, that fully reflects the personality she is.

Lucy Quay writes:

At 17, my heart stopped, four days after a meningitis vaccination. My neighbour saved my life with CPR, but for three months I was in a coma. When I came out of rehabilitation, I wanted to continue my education but I was unable to read effectively. My lovely mother transcribed A-level texts into a system of pictures, which enabled me to pass two exams.

My long-range sight slowly returned, but I was still unable to read fluently, so I considered and was offered a place at the RNIB Vocational College in Loughborough.

I have four disabilities, but



with help from learning support assistants and individual carers I became a residential student and gained more independence.

I have now completed my first year, which was a very large learning curve for the college and me. The college

had to adjust to accommodate a student with four disabilities but no intellectual limitations. Physiotherapy sessions improved my balance, regular reading practice helped me to read for longer, and my "ABC" keyboard has allowed me to use a computer independently.

I have made many friends; RNIB students are a lively bunch who are mutually supportive. I took opportunities to join in student life and joined the gym and went bowling.

Hopefully my next academic year will include work experience and help me realise my aim of becoming a receptionist. I am pleased I chose RNIB; my life has changed for the better.

James Rose writes:

My entry into mainstream education and then higher education has been generally successful, but this was no thanks to social services that should have been able to support me more.

At sixth form college, academically I was fine and I was lucky to have good assistants who helped me get around the campus and take notes. The support there was brilliant because they listened to me.

I then chose to go to University College Falmouth because it is wheelchair acces-

sible and the broadcasting course appealed to me.

The people at Falmouth are keen to accommodate my needs; they listen to me. The transition from college was difficult because social services did not provide the right support. At one point, I nearly left because of the stress, but I got through it and enjoyed myself and finished off with a 2:1 for my first year.

A great help was the Disability Students' Allowance, which bought me a new desktop computer amongst other equipment. It also pays for my



internet connection.

Overall, the educational establishments I have been to have done as much as they can to accommodate my needs. The problems I have encountered have arisen instead from poor understanding and bureaucracy at local authority level.

USEFUL CONTACTS

Advisory Centre for Education
tel: 0800 800 5793,
www.inclusive.co.uk

Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education
tel: 0117 328 4007,
www.csie.org.uk

Disability Equality in Education
tel: 020 7359 2855,
www.diseed.org.uk

Independent Panel for Special Education Advice
tel: 0800 0184016,
www.ipsea.org.uk

National Association of Special Educational Needs
tel: 01827 311 500,
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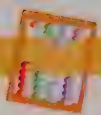
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Last piece of the jigsaw

For the first time this September, disabled students will have all the rights they need to access higher and further education. Steve Haines, education policy officer at the Disability Rights Commission, asks what this means

Alongside the government's targets on increasing participation in further and higher education, there has been a steady increase in disabled students entering higher education, with 22,068 disabled people applying through the University and College Admissions System (UCAS) in 2004. However, research by the Disability Rights Commission in 2002, which interviewed 305 young disabled people, found that of those who had not gone on to higher or further education 30 per cent said they felt they had been prevented from doing so because of a reason relating to their impairment.

This month sees the introduction of the final piece of educational provision of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). From September 2005, the legislation will require providers of post-16 education to make alterations, where reasonable, to campus buildings in order to make them accessible to disabled students.

This duty complements the existing duties not to discriminate against disabled students, and is the final piece of the jigsaw. For several years the DDA has covered admissions and student services, which means colleges and universities have had to provide auxiliary aids and services, such as note-takers or equipment, that a disabled student may need in order to do their course.

The DDA now requires that post-16 education should also make "reasonable adjustments" to the physical features of their campuses. The definition of physical features is broad. It includes steps, kerbs and paving, parking areas, building entrances and exits, toilets, lighting, lifts and escalators, furniture and temporary or moveable items. Examples of reasonable adjustments might include installing tactile flooring to indicate the beginning of a stair well for students with a visual impairment; repairing and widening paving within the grounds of an institution so that



KEITH LAWSON

Higher ambitions: John Wilkinson, who graduated from University of Leeds last year

wheelchair users can move freely between sites; or replacing existing signage with language that people with a learning difficulty will find easier to read.

Importantly, this duty is "anticipatory", which means that an institution cannot just

'This DDA duty is "anticipatory", which means that an institution cannot just wait until it is approached by a disabled student'

wait until it is approached by a disabled student, but must be thinking ahead about what kind of adjustments might be needed. Whilst providers

should aim to make their premises fully accessible, factors such as the cost of the adjustment, the interests of other students, and health and safety factors need to be taken into account in deciding whether an adjustment is reasonable or not.

Some institutions have made a flying start in getting prepared for the introduction of the duty, like Leeds University. Like most city campuses, Leeds has a maze of buildings that have been built up over the course of a century or so. But it has transformed itself into one of the most disability-friendly universities in the country. In 2002, it completed an eight-month

audit of its buildings and allocated £1.2 million to improve access to the campus. Following this, the university is able to ensure that disabled students can live in halls close to the campus and that they can usually stay in university accommodation for the whole of their course.

Further and higher education institutions have been supported by substantial capital investment by post-16 funding bodies for England, Wales and Scotland. The Higher Education Funding Council for England, for example, has run two capital projects allocating £56 million in 2001 and £117 million in 2003 to higher education institutions, specifically targeted at improving provision for disabled students.

Despite this, some colleges and universities may not have made as much progress in meeting their duties, and this may result in them turning away disabled people solely because their premises are not accessible.

From 1 September, disabled people will have a right to redress this and will have the opportunity to take cases to court, giving them the enforcement mechanism they require, although the majority of issues are likely to be settled before legal action is required. Ultimately, if a favourable result is not reached, the court will decide whether or not the provider has to remove or alter a physical feature.

Going on to further and higher education is key for disabled people to get the skills they need to fulfil their ambitions. Access to sites of learning is fundamental to this. From September, the final piece of the DDA education jigsaw will give them the rights they need to ensure they get the education they are entitled to.

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Beating the bullies

More than one in three disabled children have been bullied at school, and some schools still don't have anti-bullying policies. Elizabeth Choppin investigates

Bullying at school affects all children and in the past decade numerous initiatives have been launched to tackle the problem. Figures show that disabled pupils are more susceptible to name-calling and physical violence, so is sufficient support available to them?

According to new figures collected by Scope, almost 40 per cent of young disabled people have been bullied at school. Andrew Meller, manager of the Anti-Bullying Network, established by the Scottish Executive, suggests that bullying is still a widespread problem, as the education system only began acknowledging the problem for all pupils in 1990.

He says that in the past people have tended to assume that a child with a more obvious disability might be the first to be bullied. The truth is children with learning or communication difficulties are more often targeted.

'Communication channels are needed with everyone involved; not just the key people, but the administrative staff and the dinner ladies, because a lot of bullying happens at break times'

Mr Meller says: "I think schools are getting better at understanding this, but there is still a long way to go."

He also urges parents not to assume that their disabled child will be bullied. "A parent's anxiety is a child's anxiety and an anxious child is vulnerable and more likely to be bullied. That anxiety can become a self-fulfilling prophecy."

Part of the solution to bullying generally, Mr Meller says, is to form good relationships between schools, children and parents and to create a culture of openness.

"Honesty is admitting we don't have all the answers. We need to create a general ethos that bullying is unacceptable – and a willingness to address it when it starts. Nobody can create a complete non-bullying environment, at least not with the knowledge we have now."

Most schools now have anti-

bullying policies. Although the government does not advocate specific anti-bullying strategies, it provides summaries of well known strategies that schools find helpful. It is then up to individual schools to draw up their own policies.

In a recent speech, education secretary Ruth Kelly acknowledged that some schools still do not have adequate strategies in place to deal with bullying, including complaints procedures. This will be a focus for the new children's commissioner, Professor Al Aynsley-Green.

Petula Ftory, head of advice and advocacy at the National Autistic Society (NAS), says parents who call them with concerns about bullied children are often advised by helpline staff to contact the school's special education needs co-ordinator to discuss what anti-bullying policies are in place.

One issue to consider, Ms Ftory says, is that bullying often happens when children are not in class, but on school transport or when moving between classes. "Clear communication channels are needed with everyone involved, not just the key people, but the administrative staff and the dinner ladies, because a lot of bullying happens at break times," she says.

NAS promotes buddy systems, which can give bullied children a sense of belonging, security and better self-esteem.

Many parents whose disabled children are being bullied feel they have nowhere to turn and in some cases children are removed from school altogether.

George Noble, 14, and from Essex, has a hearing impairment. He was repeatedly physically bullied at school, until his father complained. This prompted a written reply from the school saying: "There are times when the teaching staff feel they are fighting a losing battle. No matter how hard they try, there is a limit to how much they can affect the attitudes and behaviour of a minority of students."

After a brief police investigation, the main bully was given a warning, but George's parents decided to withdraw him from school as he

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Unhappy outlook: Bullying often happens when children are out of class during break times

had become so affected. They wish they had done this sooner.

Oran Frostick, who is 14 and has cerebral palsy, started being bullied while in mainstream school. As the situation worsened, his parents decided he should switch schools. But after a year at his new school, in which he studied alongside other students with special needs, Oran started being bullied again. Even though one student was suspended for verbal abuse, others continued the bullying. It was decided to

move Oran to another class, but by this stage he was so distressed, his parents withdrew him from school permanently. "We feel schools too easily lump all special needs children into one class," his mum Rose says.

Oran is now taught at home by a tutor. He is about to start a music technology course and, although nervous, he hopes that at college things will be different and that his future will be free of the bullying that has impacted so badly on his schooling to date.

WHO TO CONTACT

Anti-Bullying Network

tel: 0131 651 6100

www.antibullying.net

BBC – bullying info

www.bbc.co.uk/schools/bullying

Bullying online

www.bullying.co.uk

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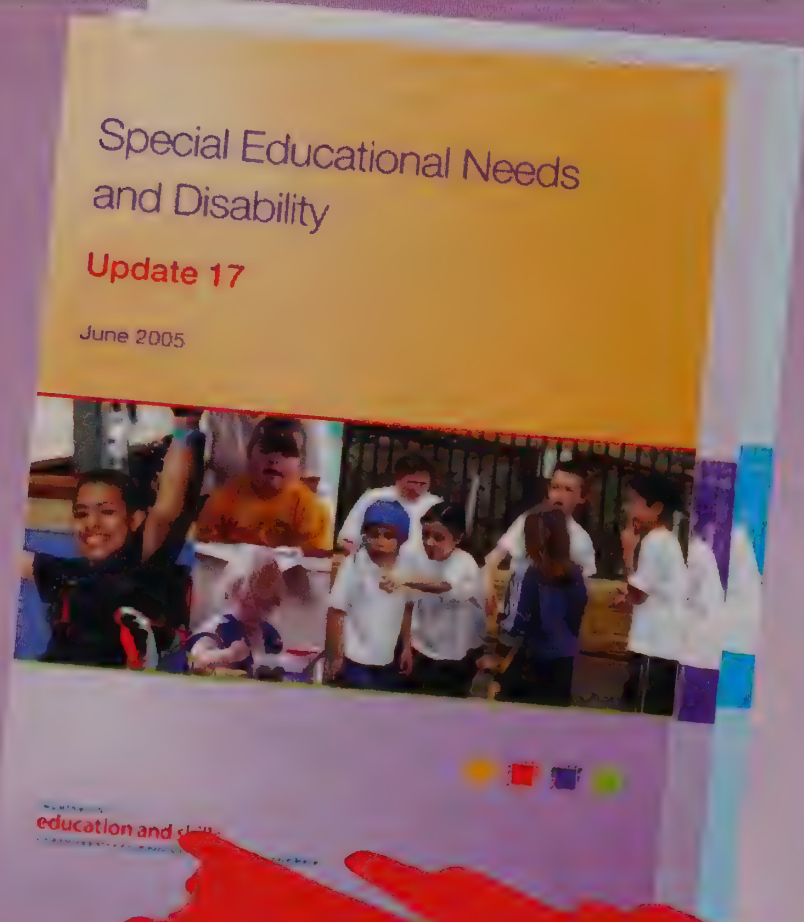
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Monet for all folk Float free

Michael Turner takes his family to the National Gallery

Arriving in central London a week after the attempted bombings of 21 July, my daughters, Rachel, 13, and Abigail, nine, and niece Sarah, were initially more interested in the hordes of armed police than they were in the traditional sights.

We had come to have a look round the rejuvenated and pedestrian-friendly Trafalgar Square and the National Gallery on its northern side.

Having parked in the Blue Badge spaces on the west side of the square, we headed into the gallery through the Sainsbury Wing.

The gallery is generally organised by historical period, and while the Sainsbury Wing is the newest part, it houses the oldest part of the collection, 1500 to 1600. This is virtually all religious artworks and the children were soon a bit fed up.

Moving into the main and older part of the building gave you much more of a feeling of being in a proper art gallery; high ceilings, plush wallpaper and a slightly musty smell gave a classical atmosphere.

These sections held the children's interest a bit more. They, and I, enjoyed it more when they found pictures by artists they knew and had



studied at school, like Van Gogh and Monet.

The gallery is well worth a visit to see famous works like Van Gogh's *Sunflowers* in the flesh and appreciate the textures, and sometimes just the size, of the originals.

There were two themed exhibitions, *The Stuff of Life* and George Stubbs' horse pictures. These were probably more enjoyable than the historically organised galleries, which work better for those who know their art history.

Access through the gallery is good. The majority of the exhibition space is on one level, which is reached by lift. The varnished wooden floors are easy to walk on and should be good for wheelchair users too. There are heavy doors between many of the galleries, but there are lots of staff members

around who I am sure would help if these were a problem.

Trafalgar Square itself has changed significantly since the north side was pedestrianised. It's not exactly peaceful – you are not far from the traffic – but you can move freely throughout the square.

There is a set of fairly steep stairs from the raised north side down to the main area with the base of Nelson's Column, the lions and the fountains. However, the renovations have included two lifts, and there are accessible loos.

After the gallery the children were happy to have some space to run about and make some noise and they saw that there is a lot more to be fascinated by in London than armed police.

● Tel: 020 7747 2888, www.nationalgallery.org.uk

Geoff Adams-Spink enters zero gravity in a floatation tank

You're lying in warm water, there is soft light, ambient music and you feel yourself drifting away on a magic carpet. They say everyone's experience of floating is different, but that sums up my first time.

Floating involves the use of extremely salty water, so you are held afloat without the effort of keeping your arms and legs straight.

"Apart from going to outer space, it's the closest you'll get to zero gravity," says Sacha Hemans, who owns Floatopia in West London.

Floatopia has ramped access, a disabled loo and one of its four floatation suites is adapted for people with mobility impairments. Inside the floatation room there are extra grab rails and the centre encourages disabled customers to bring their PAs.

One person who has benefited is life coach Simon Barnes from Bristol. He is a wheelchair user and, because he has good upper body mobility, is able to get in and out of the float room unaided. He says anyone who needs assistance in and out of the

bath would probably need help with this.

Apart from the sense of deep relaxation and wellbeing after a session, Mr Barnes was pleased that he no longer had pains in his hips.

"When I was in the tank – being totally weightless – all my joints had a complete

break," he says.

He describes the post-float afterglow as like "renewed energy flowing around my body".

The benefits of floating are said to be cumulative – so the introductory offer of three

sessions for £75 is tempting, given a single, hour-long float costs £45.

Having already used up my introductory offer, I am considerably calmer with back pain and I'm planning to become a regular. It's a good alternative to wine or cigarettes at the end of a stressful day.

● Sacha Hemans is offering a free float to the first five DN readers who send him an email at: sacha@floatopia.co.uk, tel: 020 8994 0708, www.floatopia.co.uk



Naval gazing

Charlie Keeble visits the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich



Maritime fans are in for a treat at the National Maritime Museum's *Nelson and Napoleon* exhibition in Greenwich. The event celebrates the 200th anniversary of Britain's naval victory at Trafalgar and is an inspiration to visitors who learn that Nelson – one of our national heroes – was disabled himself.

The museum is very disability friendly. Lifts go to every floor, the walkways are wide, and guide dogs are welcome.

Even better is the audio tour and transcripts of the information signs in Braille are available from the entrance.

I found the exhibit to be a

fascinating tale about the lives and times of two men, one who survived for his empire and one who died. There is a whole array of relics from the past, each telling their own story. Most remarkable was the selection of clothes, including those that Nelson wore when he was killed in action, bullet hole still visible.

I moved on to the Caird library, a resource of maritime literature, which has over 100,000 books. A particularly interesting tale came from a book about Nelson, which told how he lost his right arm and eye in a battle in Tenerife in 1791. At first he felt he'd never be considered useful again, but he returned home a national hero and when he became fit for war again he regained his confidence to fight for king and country.

Inspirational stuff indeed. ● Exhibition runs to 13 November. Tel: 020 8312 6565, www.nmm.ac.uk

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Testing times again

Drivers who have passed their advanced driving test reduce their insurance costs and their likelihood of having an accident. Helen Smith goes back to driving school

Like most people, I like to think I'm a pretty good driver. I passed my test more than ten years ago and apart from reversing into a concrete pillar and someone driving into the back of me, my driving record is clean. But, however good I think I am, there is always room for improvement. So when it was suggested I might think about an advanced driving assessment, it sounded like a good idea.

My assessment was carried out by Roy Purdy from the Norfolk and Norwich Group of Advanced Motorists. They are part of the Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM), an organisation which aims to promote road safety by raising driving standards.

Before we set off, Roy explained to me that he wasn't a teacher or an instructor but an observer. He would look at my driving and make suggestions on how I could improve. I thought getting in the car with Roy would be like my driving test all over again,

but it wasn't half as bad. Before long we were chatting like old friends.

We drove for just over an hour on various roads, from busy city streets to twisty country roads. As I drove, Roy asked me what I was looking out for and what the various speed limits were. He also pointed out that I needed to use my mirrors more, which I duly tried to do, and showed me how to check I was two seconds behind the car in front by counting "one thousand, two thousand" from when the car in front passed a signpost. Two

'I thought getting in the car with Roy would be like my driving test all over again, but it wasn't half as bad'

seconds is the minimum distance you should be from the car in front on a dry road. It rises to four seconds on a wet road and ten when it's icy.

I asked Roy how soon he



BOB HOBBS PHOTOGRAPHY

Wheel progress: Helen gets taken through her paces by advanced driver Roy Purdy

thought I could take my advanced driving test and he thought, like most competent drivers, I'd be ready in about three months if I went out with an observer once a week for about 90 minutes. He also said there was nothing in the test I wouldn't be able to do because of my disability.

When we got back, Roy went through a few things he thought I could work on to improve my driving. As well as using my mirrors more, he said I could position my car better

on bends and I didn't need to indicate when there was no one to indicate to.

Advanced driving is recommended for people of any age, but Roy thinks there isn't much point in doing it until a year after you've passed your driving test as you need time to build up your driving skills.

Apart from being a better driver, advanced drivers can get cheaper car insurance. This isn't surprising considering members of the IAM have a greatly reduced chance of a road accident – as much as 75 per cent, according to the Independent Transport

Research Laboratory.

The Norfolk and Norwich Group of Advanced Motorists is one of the largest groups in England, but there are many others around the country.

Roy has convinced me that going in for my advanced driving test will be both interesting and rewarding, as well as being a way of making the roads safer for myself and others. So, over the next few months, I will start practising my skills with the hope of taking my test before the end of the year. I'll keep you posted on my progress.

• www.iam.org.uk

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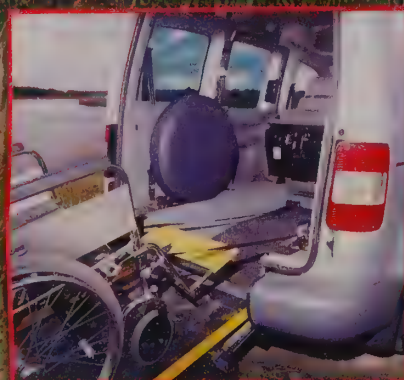
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Why I chose to sue

Four years ago, Lin Berwick was mishandled by airline staff while flying to Edinburgh. Last month, her legal battle ended with an out-of-court settlement of £170,000 – a sum she is unhappy with – but she tells *DN* why her fight was never just about the money

In September 2001 I flew from Edinburgh to Stansted with Go Fly airlines.

During the journey I experienced two horrific incidents while being manually handled where I was forced to sit in seats that were not suitable for my legs. I ended up with injuries to my back, shoulders, knees and hamstrings and after the incident I needed post-traumatic stress counselling, extensive physiotherapy and acupuncture.

Because I had been permanently damaged, I decided I could not allow Go to get away with their actions.

The airline admitted liability, but, because I was already disabled, an awful game of ping-pong between the lawyers started, with both sides negotiating over how much compensation I was entitled to.

I have always considered myself to be a capable person who can cope with almost anything, but when it came to fighting a major organisation I was reduced to a nervous wreck.

Unless your lawyer says you have a cast iron case, think very carefully before pursuing legal action. In my case, much of the legal fighting that took place was to determine by how many years the injuries I'd sustained at Go's hands had progressed my disability.

It took almost four years to reach a consensus that was acceptable to both sets of lawyers, but the final decision did not please me.

It was decided that my disability had progressed by six years, even though my expert witness said that there were ten years of deterioration.

It also seemed a complete injustice that the payment due to me was reduced because my husband, Ralph, has been my main carer, even though he is now too disabled himself to offer me 24/7 care.

Although I needed full-time care, I have not been able to afford it. It was suggested that we remortgage the house in the meantime in order to pay for care but we had no idea that the legal arguments would last for as long as they did or what the outcome would be.

Paying for the care I needed

was dependent on how much work I could do and how much I could borrow from friends.

Almost four years of legal arguments and borrowing money has left me with £30,000 worth of debt. This compares to just £170,000 in compensation from Go Fly Ltd, now owned by EasyJet.

Another extra cost I have is extra equipment. Within the next year or so I will need a hoist, a tailgate vehicle and a

'Unless your lawyer says you have a cast iron case, think very carefully before considering legal action'

lightweight wheelchair to assist my carers. I will need them much sooner than if I had not got on to those planes.

This extra equipment will cost around £27,000, but because my current care bill is around £600 a week, I do not know how I'll be able to afford those necessities.

When I think about my future, I find myself looking into an abyss. After examining

me, my expert witness for the court said that I have the type of cerebral palsy that means I am only able to stand when my muscles are in tension; therefore muscle relaxants to ease my new pain may not be a viable option.

She said: "You could be totally consumed by pain and there may be nothing that can be done."

I told her that when I get to that stage I will be taking myself off to Holland for a lethal injection.

She put her arm around me, gave me a hug and replied: "No one would blame you if you did."

I now think of my whole life in multiples of care costs. There is little enjoyment or quality of life, just worry for the future.

What upsets me most is the inhumanity of all that has happened. At the very least, the airline could have stopped worrying about balance sheets and expressed a little bit more humanity towards me. I understand how difficult it is to determine natural consequences of disability and injury, but my injuries were



caused by corporate greed, lack of compassion and a total disregard for the welfare of disabled people.

I would like to hear from people who have experienced similar inappropriate treatment

whilst travelling and perhaps we can start a campaign to improve how companies treat disabled people.

• You can email Lin at: lin@lberwick.fsnet.co.uk or write to her c/o DN

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Home alone

The Wood family feel they have been all but abandoned by social services, leaving daughter Sarah-Jane to be the main carer. Dad Martin tells their story



Home comforts: Sarah-Jane at home with dad Martin and mum Wendy

Our daughter Sarah-Jane was born in 1989. When my wife Wendy, who has cerebral palsy, was pregnant, she and I were assured by social services that when the baby was born we would get all the help we needed. I had Crohn's disease which meant support from me would always be slightly hit-and-miss. However, when Wendy gave birth, we received no help at all. It was the start of a lifetime's struggle to get the support we need as a family – a battle that continues today with Sarah-Jane, now 15, the main carer for my wife and I.

Making sacrifices goes with the territory when you care for someone, and mine started

early when I gave up work as a self-employed taxi driver to help Wendy. We were left with £25,000 worth of debt. The only form of home-help we were getting was a once-weekly bath for my wife from the charity Crossroads as well as any help that my mother, who was in her 70s, could give us. This turned out to be a lot; not just in financial terms, but also around the house.

She did this alongside all her normal grandmother type duties, like baby-sitting, changing nappies and so on. But even back then, it was family and charities giving my wife the support she needed – not social services.

My daughter started school

at the age of four. We noticed that she limped badly and at first thought she was copying her mum. We were advised to seek a medical opinion. They

'We have always said to Sarah-Jane that caring for us should never something she feels she has to do, but something she wants to do'

said my daughter had Perthes Disease and would need a hip replacement when she got older. The Perthes Association gave us a lot of help, but once again, social services all but ignored us.

What they did do was allocate us a care worker who came and assessed my wife and decided she needed home-help. This started out well, but soon the helpers sent to us began changing. As Wendy has a speech defect, new people found it hard to understand what she needed. Before long, home-help staff no longer asked my wife what she wanted but instead told her what they would do. In the end, we cancelled it.

Our lives soon became more complex. My mother passed away and I was diagnosed with renal failure. In September 2000 I started haemodialysis, meaning a trip of 66 miles to the nearest renal unit three times a week. Suddenly two of my wife's main carers were off the scene.

We were lucky that the care gap was filled – once again – by Crossroads, who came in at breakfast and dinner times to make sure my wife was dressed and properly fed. Sarah-Jane also stepped up her help, because when I got back from dialysis, I was too tired to help around the house.

Today, two years after having a successful kidney transplant, the only help we get is our once-weekly visit from Crossroads. The main carer has become Sarah-Jane, now 15, who is studying for her GCSEs.

She helps in the morning before going to school, getting breakfast for her mum and helping her to get dressed. After school, she helps prepare the evening meal, tidies up around the house and helps me give her mum a bath.

We always stress that school work must come before caring and she must complete all her homework before helping us. The school understands Sarah-Jane's position at home and are helpful in giving her time off if she needs it.

Her friends are equally good and I don't think caring duties

have hindered her social life. In the periods when I have been an in-patient at hospital, the amount of time she had to herself has drastically decreased, but her friends are all understanding and most of them are very supportive.

Sarah-Jane isn't able to get away as much as she should, as the council offers no respite care. The only break she gets is at Swale Young Carers (SYC), where she goes once a week. As well as offering invaluable day-to-day support, they organise outings during school holidays and we encourage her to go on as many as she wants. Apart from a Young Carers Festival, the only holiday she has had in fifteen years was a weekend in Disneyland with my brother.

Sarah-Jane's future plans are more or less set. She wants to go to university and become a forensic scientist or scene of crime officer. At the moment though, she has got herself a summer job in a dental technician laboratory and seems to enjoy that.

I hope her care duties do not influence her life choices. We have always said to Sarah-Jane that caring for us should never be something she feels she has to do, but something she wants to do. If she wanted to stop her caring duties, she must feel free to do so at any time. And of course she will do when she either gets a full-time job or goes on to further education.

In the meantime, we carry on as we always have done; family helping family with occasional extra support from local charities. The rare help social services have given us has been badly planned and executed.

All I would really like from them now is an occasional visit to make sure everything is OK with us and to ensure that mum and dad, as well as Sarah-Jane, are getting all the help we can get.

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Film

Asylum

Asylum, directed by David Davies and adapted from the book by Patrick McGrath, is set in the 1950s. You can tell it's the fifties because everything is filmed with a grey tinge and all the characters speak in a repressed monotone. Arriving at a provincial psychiatric hospital are new doctor Max Raphael (Hugh Bonneville), his glamorous wife Stella (Natasha Richardson) and their son Charlie.

Their marriage is a loveless one, with Max forever telling Stella off for various social blunders. The hospital is chilling and remote and for



Passion killers: Natasha Richardson and Marton Csokas

some incomprehensible reason is run by the creepy Doctor Cleave (Ian McKellen).

Stella is bored rigid among the stuffy doctors' wives until she encounters an enigmatic patient, Edgar (Marton Csokas), who she finds irresistible. They become lovers.

Stella helps Edgar escape,

and under duress goes to live with him in a London straight out of Dickens. She lives a bohemian life until Edgar becomes violent and is mysteriously recaptured by Doctor Cleave in their attic flat.

The plot is an interesting one, addressing issues of repression, sexuality and mental illness, but nothing

ever convinces. Edgar is inarticulate and sullen and there is no chemistry between the characters, with the sex scenes dull and repetitive. Max is cold, without any inner sadness, and Ian McKellen's doctor is played with skill but no great insight.

Stella eventually returns to a chilly Max, who is dismissed for his part in the scandal. She becomes distracted to tragic effect. To go any further would give away too much, but as with everything in this film, the ending has the potential to be affecting but is confused and bitty instead.

A strange ragbag of period details and language, the film closes as it begins – lacking in authenticity and bursting with directional laziness.

Michael Shamash

Exhibition

Raised Awareness

Audio and touch tours at galleries and museums are nothing new. But *Raised Awareness* at Tate Modern gives access to art a new dimension because it was conceived and put together by artist Bill Woodrow, who thought visually impaired people should be able to experience contemporary work too.

The gallery has produced

tactile copies of each drawing, which are displayed under the originals. They feel like flock wallpaper, but the technique succeeds in conjuring different emotions, like the serenity of Charlotte Verity's rose bush, with its intricate slender lines, and the noisy room I was transported to when I explored Michael Craig-Martin's contribution with its tall stepladder, heavy bucket and tinny transistor radio.

The commentary, also available in Braille and large print, was indispensable. I felt



several of the drawings without consulting it to see if I could work out what they were. I couldn't. I know what a cat looks like but I couldn't identify one in Lisa Milroy's picture of a cat knitting a

jumper (left). The commentary put the lines and shapes on the paper into context and helped me pinpoint the cat's body.

Raised Awareness is worth a visit, but don't make the mistake I made: Roger Ackling's piece is supposed to be crumpled. It hasn't been scrunched up by a ham-fisted blind person!

• *Raised Awareness* will be at Tate Modern, London, to 30 September. Free. Tel: 020 7887 8888, www.tate.org.uk/modern
Sunil Peck

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Visually impaired artist

Prof Glynn Williams
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What's on

Events

Liberty, the disability rights arts festival, returns to Trafalgar Square in London on 3 September. The event will feature artists and performers from the UK and abroad, including Mat Fraser, Caroline Parker, Sign Dance Collective and percussion and samba group Besta Vista.
• Free, tel: 020 7983 4100, www.london.gov.uk

The Proms music festival continues to 10 September, featuring over 70 concerts at the Royal Albert Hall in London. Well worth a visit are the extended last night Proms in the Park concerts in London, Belfast, Glasgow, Manchester and Swansea. Most venues are accessible, with wheelchair access, board walks, viewing platforms and toilets.
• Tel: 020 7838 3110, www.bbc.co.uk/proms

Full What's on at www.disabilitynow.org.uk

TV

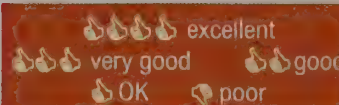
Best drama this month must be BBC1's admirable series *Your Life in Their Hands*, featuring heroic surgeons fixing everything from epilepsy (by microscopic zapping of the offending part of the brain) to life-changingly dangerous spinal surgery, as well as a ten-hour pioneering operation for cancer of the oesophagus where the stomach moves up to replace the diseased gullet. Strong stomachs needed all round.

I'm probably the only person in the world who didn't find *The Office* funny. I really have tried with Ricky Gervais' latest offering *Extras* (BBC2), not least because it features stand-up-comic-with-cp Francesca Martinez, but it just makes me cringe with embarrassment. Andy Millman (Gervais) and his cohorts display all the social skills of a teabag. Does anyone else think that this David Brent hybrid might have Asperger's? Being on the autistic spectrum would explain a good deal about the Brent/Millman approach.

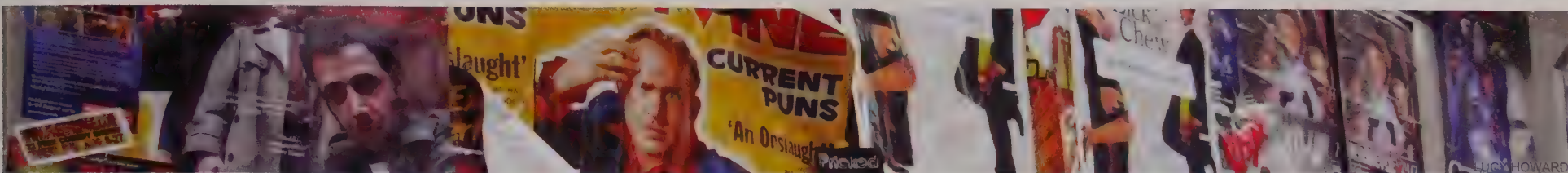
C4's two part documentary *House of Obsessive Compulsives* invited three people with obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) into a kind of OCD enclave for two weeks' group therapy to try and overcome their various distressing obsessions: hygiene, a compulsion to admit to crimes the person had not committed and a fear of dirt and glitter. Although the individual obsessions were very different, what they shared was wonderful, supportive (and endlessly patient) partners who had doubtless suffered as much through years of dealing with OCD as the patients themselves.

It begged the question of how people with OCD cope if they live alone and have no one to "run their lives for them", as one spouse put it. Happily, they all made great progress over the fortnight, but this left their partners somewhat redundant in the process and needing counselling in their own right. It made you wonder if the OCDs were even meeting the partners' needs to care on some level.

Jane Shepherd



For an entry form please send an A5-sized SAE to
BlindArt, P.O. Box 50113, London SW1X 9EY



Fringe in focus

Lucy Howard travels to Edinburgh to check out a bumper crop of shows

With 1,800 shows, 16,000 performers, 27,000 performances, 300 venues and over 1.25 million tickets sold, this was the biggest Edinburgh Fringe yet. The event that began as a little brother to the main festival is now starting to eclipse it, with shows ranging from opera to comedy, with performers strutting their stuff everywhere, from pub corners to street corners.

Disability was well-represented, especially on the comedy front. It's a ripe subject for the genre; as Steve Day says in his act, "there's no joke that doesn't have pain at its roots". And it's fashionable; Liz Carr points out later: "Disability is the new black".

Abnormally Funny People features five comedians – Steve Day, Liz Carr, Simon Minty, Tanyalee Davis, Simon McCausland and one "normally funny" comedian in the form of Steve Best. They send themselves and each other up, as well as challenging audience preconceptions, in a show that is slick, well-timed and hilarious throughout.

Tanyalee Davis speaks about our culture's obsession with weight and dieting, thanking Jennifer Lopez for making a "big ass" sexy. "I've lost five pounds. Which for a midget is like losing half a person," she says. Meanwhile Liz Carr is apprehensive about Edinburgh's cobbles, until she finds they have an unexpected but welcome effect as she bumps across them in her wheelchair. The euphoria doesn't last. "I was sitting in a café having a post-orgasmic can of coke when this woman came along and put 20p in it," she recounts.

Some members of

Abnormally Funny People were also busy with their own shows. Chris McCausland's *As Seen on TV?* discusses the state of on-screen media, and opens with him saying: "A blind guy doing observational comedy? I guess you thought if it's shit it'll be easy to walk out of".

Steve Day's *A Night at the Pictures* discusses the art of past masters, and manages to be educational and funny at the same time. "I got into art by accident. I needed the loo and there was a gallery nearby," he reflects.

The Nasty Girls return with their irreverent brand of "crip" humour in *Time Troupers*, a show featuring integrated sign language. They travel by time machine to see

how society has treated disabled people over the years, finishing with a spoof version of Abba's *Dancing Queen* ("We can't walk! We can't hear! We're having the time of our lives!").

Sign-songstress Caroline Parker's unique take on deafness in *Signs of a Diva* features the character of Tammy, who finds solace in vinyl. Parker tells her story through interpreting and signing songs from divas including Aretha Franklin and Dolly Parton.

Another musical treat comes from Jez Colborne, who has Williams syndrome, a rare form of learning difficulty. He bases *On the Verge* on a road trip he took on Route 66.

One of the characteristics of Williams syndrome is an over-friendliness towards strangers. Jaik Campbell (left), meanwhile, finds strangers hard to talk to. *I've Stuttered So I'll F-F-Finish* (marketed as "the show everyone's talking about, except Jaik") explores the effects of having a speech



Rising stars: (from left, clockwise) Caroline Parker; Jez Colborne in *On the Verge* and the Nasty Girls

impairment while growing up: "I used to write girls notes saying 'Will you go out with me?' with a 'Yes' box and a 'No' box. Now I send text messages".

While the festival is a great place to be, not everyone was having the time of their lives. Access has improved over the years, and the main venues are bigger and more accessible than ever, but this remains the exception rather than the rule.

The unprecedented growth of the event has meant a surge in numbers of venues and many are inaccessible. Some are listed buildings, and many are inaccessible pubs, including the venue for Steve Day's show. While this was regretted by the producers, it still meant excluding the very people who would have got the most out of the shows. Michael Porteous, a wheelchair user, said he has missed performances because

of a lack of access, and pointed out the irony: "If it's a disabled performer, they should at least try then to make sure the show is in an accessible venue".

Gripes aside, the festival remains the best of its kind in the world, pulling both performers and audiences back year after year. With access improving and new regulations in force, next year's event should be even bigger and better – for everyone.

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Dear Rachel

- love and loneliness
- bereavement
- personal problems
- advice and support

Rachel Wilson, who is disabled herself, has spent many years advising on disability matters. Write to her at *Disability Now*, 6 Market Road, London N7 9PW or email your problem to editor@disabilitynow.org.uk



What help can I get?

Where can I find out what help I am entitled to from social services? I can't walk far, am registered blind and use a wheelchair. Social services are not being much help and I would like to be more independent, rather than having to rely on my husband. Name and address supplied

There are two issues here. Firstly, you need to make sure you're receiving the benefits to which you are entitled and, secondly, that you're getting support and assistance to enable you to increase your independence.

I understand you already receive Disability Living Allowance, but you may be entitled to more financial help, depending on your circumstances. The Disability Information and Advice Line (DIAL) offers benefits advice and may support you during an appeal, if one is necessary.

In arranging support, you

may be entitled to receive Direct Payments from social services, which would enable you to choose who supports you. Although social services have been unhelpful so far, it is worth contacting them again to make a specific request for Direct Payments. If this fails, then DIAL, or your local Citizens Advice Bureau (listed in the phone book) may support you.

- *DIAL*, www.dialuk.info, tel and minicom: 01302 310123
- *National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux*, www.citizensadvice.org.uk, tel: 020 7833 2181

Home truths

One of my children has cerebral palsy and my husband and I adapted our home to meet their needs. My husband died last year and his mother, who also lives with me and who owns half the house, now wants to go into care, which will mean selling the house. It is a complex situation. I do not want to move

from the house that is adapted for our child, but my mother-in-law needs capital from the house to pay for her care.

Sally, by email

You need to take legal advice on this matter, although I am sure it can be solved. The Disability Law Service (DLS) operates a helpline giving independent legal advice on various disability-related matters. They may be able to suggest a way of raising finance from the house without requiring it to be sold.

- *DLS*, tel 020 7791 9800, minicom: 020 7791 9801

Changing my PA

Iwant to move to a different part of London and reorganise my personal assistance. My current PA comes from a care agency and is funded by social services, but I would prefer to find my own PA.

Jane, by email

Changing your PA requires careful planning to ensure your

Cold comfort

Is there a scheme for disabled people, similar to the Staywarm scheme for people over 60, that helps with heating bills? I require a lot of heating and any help I can get would be good. Douglas, by email

The cost of additional heating can be an issue for many disabled people. There is no single scheme that provides fixed bills specifically if you are disabled, but there is a scheme called Warm Front. This provides grants for housing improvements to and may, for example, fund loft or cavity wall insulation. These simple alterations are designed to reduce energy bills.

Similar low-cost energy saving measures may be available from energy suppliers, such as British Gas, who offer cavity wall and loft insulation to people on low incomes. They also offer disabled customers a priority attention scheme.

Finally, some councils also operate schemes to help people with energy costs. Contact yours to find out if they do.

- *British Gas*, www.house.co.uk, textphone: 0845 600 8500, tel: 0845 600 1935
- *Warm Front Scheme*, tel: 0800 952 1555 or 0800 316 0808

particular requirements are met. A good place to go for advice is the National Centre for Independent Living (NCIL). They are experienced in a range of issues related to independent living and will be able to advise you where to access PAs.

- *NCIL*, tel: 0207 587 1663, textphone: 0207 587 1177, email: ncil@ncil.org.uk

Trapped in my flat

Ihave been trapped in my flat now for seven months without getting out and I am getting depressed. I would love a holiday, if transport can be provided and I can take my pets.

Rachel, via email

I'm sorry you are having a difficult time. You have a right to be able to leave your home

and have transport support as necessary. Contact your social services department and ask for details of their Direct Payments scheme so that you can arrange your own support.

There are organisations that provide specialised holidays for disabled people, that include transport and care provision, although accommodation that will take pets may be limited.

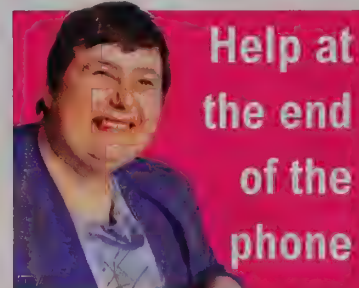
Information on the range of holidays suitable for you is available from Tripscope, a company which provides an advice service on all aspects of travel for disabled people, including holidays. Vitalise (formerly the Winged Fellowship Trust) provides group holidays and the Holiday Care Service provides a range of holiday information, which may also be useful.

- *Tripscope helpline*, tel: 08457 58 56 41, www.tripscope.org.uk
- *Vitalise*, tel: 0845 345 1972, www.vitalise.org.uk
- *Holiday Care Service*, tel: 0845 124 9971, minicom: 0845 124 9976, www.holidaycare.org



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Help at the end of the phone

DN's telephone counsellor Lin Berwick gives disabled people and carers advice and support on personal and spiritual problems. Disabled herself, Lin is a psychotherapeutic counsellor and Methodist local preacher, with a postgraduate diploma in homeopathic medicine. If you have something you need to discuss in confidence, talk to her on Mondays 6pm-10pm and Thursdays 1pm-5pm, tel: 01787 882111.

Bog standard is not good enough

Next week is Continence Awareness Week, but as Lisa Bratby discovers, new regulations are failing to improve the standard of accessible public toilets in the UK

The fact that there is just a handful of integrated continence services in England and Wales (see page 13) will come as no surprise to experts. Although continence problems affect several million disabled people, the need for support is repeatedly ignored.

This lack of priority in healthcare is matched in other areas too. The charity Is There An Accessible Loo? (ITAAL) is shortly to close because of a lack of funding. Diana Twitchin, chair of trustees at ITAAL, says "nobody really wants to know" about continence issues. She is upset that her organisation is no longer able to get funding, either from the government or trust funds.

Mrs Twitchin says there is still a long way to go in improving accessibility. "I hear about disabled women who won't go out because they don't know where accessible loos are. These issues don't even get talked about."

'80 per cent of public toilets don't comply with the DDA'

ITAAL has started analysing its most recent survey results, on the public's use of accessible loos, and is in talks with VivaCity 2020, a government-funded project looking at city centre living, about taking that work forward. University College London [UCL] is already carrying out research on the design of public toilets as part of the project.

UCL researchers visited Japan, considered to be one of the leaders in toilet provision, earlier this year. They found that in Tokyo and Kyoto there are extensive toilet building and refit programmes in line with access legislation. Toilet designers take into account the needs of families and disabled people who have a carer of the opposite sex. As well as baby-changing facilities, there are low-level urinals and sometimes adapted sinks with showerheads for people with

stomas. Accessible facilities are located every 500 yards in some areas of Kyoto.

Compare this to the UK, where the number of public toilets has halved over the past decade to around 5,000, according to Richard Chisnell, director of the British Toilet Association, which runs the Loo of the Year Awards.

He says that public toilet provision is a discretionary service, not a statutory one, and with anti-social behaviour such as drug abuse and vandalism often associated with public toilets, it is easier for local authorities not to provide them.

Meanwhile, access requirements for goods and services under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) that were introduced almost a year ago are being used by local authorities as an excuse for closing public loos rather than improving them.

Mr Chisnell estimates that "80 per cent of public toilets don't comply with the DDA in one way or another". He is due to meet with government officials in October to get public toilet provision on the agenda. "The only way to do that is for them to say to local authorities 'you must have a provision strategy'," he says.

Going to the loo is a basic need for everyone, he adds, and local authorities must not "abdicate responsibility" and expect shops and restaurants to act as toilet providers.

But Mrs Twitchin says the DDA has meant that at least people planning and building accessible loos are seeking help and advice. She says there is a lot of good design work happening and that access standards for loos in part M of the Building Regulations meet most people's requirements, although architects often "still pick and choose from it".

A spokesperson from Incontact says that many "independent wheelchair users are left unable to reach the flush handle of the most common toilet fitted. Pedal bins often block access with soap dispensers and towels

badly placed. Few have a hoist". She adds: "There is usually a complete lack of disposal facilities in men's loos for incontinence pads and catheters and it can be difficult to dispose of large pads even in ladies and disabled loos."

These issues affected Rosemary Walker, who brought a case under the DDA and

'I hear about disabled women who won't go out because they don't know where accessible loos are'

settled out of court in April.

In 2003, Ms Walker, a youth worker for Merseyside Youth Association, attended a two-day training course run by Liverpool City Council. On the first day of the course, Ms Walker, who uses a colostomy



Shut: The number of public toilets in the UK has halved in the past decade

bag, was forced to tell fellow delegates about her disability when she discovered she could not change her bag because there was no sanitary disposal box in the toilet. Another course delegate had to organise a disposal box to be brought to the building.

Ms Walker said: "It was the loss of dignity and not being treated with respect that made me so angry. I am talking about basic facilities... it's not as if I needed anything special. There is no excuse that it was not available on an accessible environments course."

At the time, Bert Massie, chair of the Disability Rights Commission, said the settlement served as a strong reminder that the rights of disabled people go beyond just

physical access to buildings and include ensuring people with long-term health conditions can participate equally in services and training.

CONTACTS

The Continence Foundation Provides a helpline and leaflets. Tel: 0845 345 0165 or see www.continence-foundation.org.uk

Incontact Offers advice, leaflets and local help groups. Tel: 0870 770 3246 or see www.incontact.org

RADAR runs the National Key Scheme, which gives independent access to locked public accessible toilets around the UK.

Tel: 020 7250 3222 or see www.radar.org.uk

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E A S Y K I T

Lucy Andrews answers your questions

"Can you recommend a telephone for someone with speech and hearing difficulties?"

There are a number of solutions if the telephone user has difficulty hearing the person on the telephone line, but for someone with poor clarity of speech, the choice

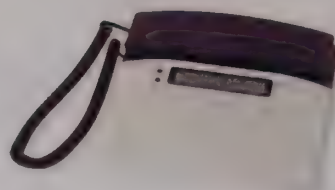
is more limited.

Some solutions for amplifying sound include using an add-on amplifier that simply straps on over the handset earpiece, or an in-line amplifier that connects between the handset and phone £12 - £39. *RNID Sound Advantage*, tel: 0870 789 8855,

www.rnidshop.com

Some phones have volume control for incoming speech, or they may include an inductive coupler that improves sound clarity by cutting out the background noise. Because these phones work in conjunction with the user's hearing aid (which must be switched to the 'T' position) they are termed "hearing aid compatible". Corded and analogue cordless phones can be hearing aid compatible, but not digital ones. Corded models include the RELATE 3000 from BT, £49.99, and the Gondola CL10, £18. Sarabec Ltd, tel: 01642 247789, www.sarabec.co.uk; for a cordless one, look at the BT Freestyle 60, £25.

Mobile phones don't include an inductive coupler, but some can be used with an add-on one, including ones from Gordon Morris, tel: 01458 850396, www.gordonmorris.co.uk



If clarity of speech is poor, it is likely to be further distorted over the phone lines, making it more difficult to hear. For emergency situations, a digitised speech box could be used to transmit pre-recorded messages. Suppliers include



Liberator, tel: 01476 550391, www.liberator.co.uk and QED, tel: 0870 787 8850, www.qedltd.com.

For better conversation, the solution may be to use text to communicate.

Textphones plug into the phone lines and have a qwerty keyboard and a text display. They are useful for people with a hearing and/or a speech impairment. A textphone user can call up other textphone

users and communicate by typed messaging. If the person they wish to call does not have a textphone they can use the Typetalk relay service run by the RNID. The call is relayed through staff at the Typetalk centre who can read the message and pass it on. The service works in reverse to enable a non-textphone user to communicate with a hearing impaired person. *RNID Sound Advantage* sells a range of textphones from £100.

Mobile phones have also helped deaf and hearing impaired people because of the texting facility. Smartmobiles can include a fold-out Qwerty keyboard for quicker text messaging, such as the Nokia 68 series.

For general advice on choosing a phone refer to the *Ricability* report *Staying in Touch*, tel: 020 7427 2460, text: 020 7427 2469 or go to www.ricability.org.uk For specific advice on hearing loss, contact the RNID, tel: 0808 808 0123, text: 0808 808 9000 or go to www.rnid.org.uk The Disabled Living Foundation's helpline can advise on the range of products available to help with deafness. Contact them on 0845 130 9177 or email advice@dlf.org.uk. A local Disabled Living Centre can also advise. Addresses are on the Disabled Living Centres Council's website: www.dlcc.org.uk Lucy Andrews is a senior advisor at the DLF.

If you have got a question you would like Lucy to answer, email editor@disabilitynow.org.uk or post it to the usual address.



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CAREERS

Gallant2000 runs a Disability Equality Certificate (NVQ2) which covers equality and the DDA, and an Access Audit Practitioner course (NVQ4) which covers access issues including environmental concerns and communication. Contact Disability West Midlands, tel: 0121 414 1616, info@dwm.org.uk, www.dwm.org.uk

There will be **British Sign Language (BSL)** courses in Nottingham starting in September, including a taster course on 10 September (£6) and a 30-week CACDP Level 1 course starting on 17 September (£95 plus £42 exam fee). *Rushcliffe Leisure Centre*, Boundary Road, West Bridgford. Booking is essential. Minicom: 0115 9214029, mobile (text only): 07793 317107, email: mandybrennan2@msn.com

What's on

Hearing Concern is holding a festival of hearing solutions on 11 September at the International Students House in London. The festival, which will feature an appearance from comedian Steve Day, will provide information and advice for people with hearing impairments. The event will cover various topics including employment, health, sports and equipment. 229 Great Portland Street, Regent's Park. See www.hcactive.org.uk/festival and www.hearingconcern.org.uk

FocusAbility – Wakefield is holding its annual exhibition and family fun day on 11 September at Thornes Park athletics stadium in Wakefield. There will be representatives from voluntary support groups and government services, as well as trade stands. Free. Tel: 01924 332554, email: vcgjubilee@yahoo.com

The **Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities** is holding a conference for people with learning difficulties on 12 September at the London Voluntary Resource Centre. The conference will focus on spirituality, including storytelling and faith workshops. To book, tel: 020 7803 1142, email: fwhitnall@fpld.org.uk, www.fpld.org.uk

There will be a conference focusing on mental health training and education in London on 15 September, including presentations and workshops. *ORT House conference centre*. From £195. Tel: 0870 161 3505, www.pavpub.com

The **Psoriatic Arthropathy Alliance (PAA)** is holding a conference on 17 September at Woburn Safari Park in Bedfordshire. The event will include question and answer sessions. Tel: 0870 7703212, email: info@thepaa.org

Headway North Herts is holding a conference titled Living with Head Injury-Community and Long-term Support on 21 September in St Albans. The event is aimed at professionals working with people with head injuries. Tel: 01462 491244, email: headwaynh@tesco.net

Aston University is holding a one-day training course

on the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) at the university on 22 September. The event will include sessions on building regulations and access audits. £229. Tel: 0121 204 3593, email: h.mallinson@aston.ac.uk

The **Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People** is holding a conference titled

Disabled People's Movement-Looking to the Future on 24 September in Manchester. The event will include a national perspective on the movement and a focus on how to involve more young people. Bridgewater Hall. Tel: 0161 273 5137, email: info@gmcdp.com

The **Multiple Sclerosis Society** is holding a national information day at the Novotel in York on 24

September, including advice and workshops. Tel: 020 8438 0809, email: pcrossman@mssociety.org.uk

The **Brain Injury Rehabilitation Trust (BIRT)** is hosting a conference titled Looking Ahead: Innovations in Brain Injury Rehabilitation in Manchester from 28-30 September. Tel: 01924 896 100, www.birt.co.uk

Gowrings Mobility is holding **Mobility North** at MAGNA, a science adventure centre in a former steelworks in Rotherham, on 30 September and 1 October. The exhibition will feature the latest mobility equipment, adaptations and converted cars. There will also be an appearance from Dame Tanni Grey Thompson. Tel: 0845 608 8020, www.gowringsmobility.co.uk

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or please contact **Fiona McGeever**, Travel Campaign Manager. Tel: **020 7619 7335**.

Minicom: **020 7619 7226**. Email: fiona.mcgeeve@scope.org.uk

The survey is also available in alternative formats on request. Closing date for the return of surveys is **Friday 9 December 2005.**

scope

About cerebral palsy.
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Independent Living London

Independent Living London will be at Alexandra Palace from 21-22 September. The event will feature a range of products and services, with exhibitors ranging from mobility suppliers to charities, including the RNIB, Motability, Ricability, Allied Vehicles, Mangar International and the Disability Rights Commission (DRC). There will also be interactive feature



areas, including a relaxation zone and a gallery of art and poetry from the London

Disability Arts Forum (LDAF). Don't forget to visit DN at stand number G64.

The venue is accessible, including signage, accessible toilets, changing facilities and adapted cutlery at the food outlets. Sign language interpreters, and show guides in audio and Braille, are available on request. There will be trained

staff on hand to assist visitors.

Getting there: there will be free accessible buses operating from Euston and Wood Green stations, and accessible taxis available at the venue. There will be free parking for Blue/Orange badge holders, on the upper level car parks, which will give level access to the venue.

Opening times: 21 September – 10am-5pm, 22 September –

10am-4.30pm.

To book free tickets, tel: 0870 429 4372, or register online at www.independentlivingevents.co.uk



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Publications

The Roald Dahl Foundation and the **National Library for the Blind (NLB)** have joined forces to add five new Braille titles for children to NLB's library, including *Skeleton Key* by Anthony Horowitz and *The Thief Lord* by Cornelia Funke. The NLB offers a free postal service for Braille books. Tel: 0161 355 2000, www.nlb-online.org, www.roalddahlfoundation.org

Beds Garden Carers has published a cookbook titled *Dining with Celebs: The Recipe Book*, featuring recipes from a range of celebrities, including Sir Cliff Richard and Dame Judi Dench. The proceeds will go towards supporting people with learning difficulties in Bedfordshire. £7.95. Tel: 01234 352899, www.bedsgardencarers.org.uk

Disabled Holiday Information has published a brochure on accessible tourist attractions in Shropshire. The brochure is available at visitor information centres throughout the county, or send an SAE (two first class stamps) to Disabled Holiday Information, PO Box 186, Oswestry, SY10 1AF, or see www.disabledholidayinfo.org.uk

Shared Care Network has produced a DVD titled *Getting to Know Me*, which covers short breaks for children with autistic spectrum disorders. It features interviews with parents, carers and young people. From £45. Tel: 0117 941 5361, www.sharedcarenetwork.org.uk

The **Continence Foundation** has published a leaflet titled *The Overactive Bladder*, giving information and treatment options. Tel: 0845 345 0165, www.continencefoundation.org.uk

DN LINAGE

Tel: 020 7619 7320, Fax: 020 7619 7331, Minicom: 020 7619 7332,
email: patrick.durhammatthews@scope.org.uk

• Cars/vans/caravans

VW SHARAN CARAT 1.9 Tdi, auto, 44k miles, Automotive conversion, wheelchair plus 5, one owner, fsh, many extras, Y reg. £11,950. Tel: 01752 216844 (Plymouth).

NISSAN PRAIRIE MK 2 2.4LX, auto, sea moon, M reg (1994) with Brotherwood conversion incl raised roof giving 59" internal headroom, carries 5 incl driver, front passenger with revolving seat and transfer beam, wheelchair and 2 side seats in rear. Independent suspension, pas and only 36k miles. £5,200 ono. Tel: 020 8578 8545 (Greenford, Middlesex).

RENAULT TRAFIC 2.2 diesel, Atlas conversion, Jan 06 MOT, S reg, RICON lift, locking clamps, bench seat in front, 2 seats in back, privacy windows all around. £4,250 ono. Tel: 01473 612380.

1999 T REG Citreon Xantia 1.8i SX 5dr Auto with hand controls fitted for use by lower limb paraplegic. Petrol, 54k miles, black, pas, remote central locking and alarm, 6 CD changer, Climate control, Airbags, 2 lady owners, electric mirrors, electric windows (front and rear), Trafficmaster. Price £2,225ono. Tel: 01293 825448 (Gatwick) or 07917 605481.

RENAULT KANGOO, WHEELCHAIR Accessible Vehicle. Reg April 05. 3 Years warranty. 581 mileage. £11,995 ono. Tel 01782 516513 or 07932 623 404 (Staffs).

SEAT TERRA VISTA, wheelchair adapted. 903cc. 40+ MPG. Tax and MOT. In daily use. H Reg. £700 ono. Tel 01920 484568.

MERCEDES VITO R reg, tail ramp, accommodates 5 plus 2 wheelchairs, air con, e/windows, 2 owners, MOT April 2006, new gearbox. £6,000. Tel: 01252 794479.

VW SHARAN CARAT 2 litre, petrol, P reg (1996), 65k miles, green. With Brotherwood conversion incl rear ramp, carries 5 including wheelchair. Air con, central locking, e/windows and e/mirrors. Full year's MOT, fully serviced. £5,995 ono. Tel: 0116 2865172 or mobile: 07712 132259.

PEUGEOT EXPERT 1.9, diesel, blue with Constables Conversion, 53 Reg, 10,500 miles. 12 months' Peugeot warranty & roadside assistance. Air conditioned, central locking, full service history. CD/radio, electric winch system, Ramp. Seats 4 including wheelchair. One owner from new. £11,995 ono. Tel: 01948 663393 (Shropshire) or mobile: 07831 091414.

KIA SEDONA 2.9 Tdi, auto, fully wheelchair accessible with rear ramp. V reg, 53k miles, carries 4 incl wheelchair, e/windows and e/mirrors, CD player. Only 2 owners from new, fsh, MOT until Dec 05. In very good condition, £8,000 ono. Tel: 01865 395348 (Oxford).

MERCEDES V220 TREND Cdi Auto. Yreg 2002. Diesel. Fully fitted with electrical adaptations. Perfect for independent disabled driver. Serviced 1/8/05. MOT due Sept 05. Very low mileage (5000). FSH. One lady owner. Sale due to illness. Fully compact system. 6 seats. One taken out for adaptations. Seat available for family use. All basic features from Mercedes. Showroom condition. £23,000 ono. Tel 01292 521373 or 07782 252445. (Ayrshire).

SILVER MERCEDES V220CDI Ambiente 2002, diesel, automatic, fitted with Interbilty hydraulic wheelchair lift and full tie down system for wheelchair, 1 year's MOT & 1 year's tax, annual service just carried out, low mileage 18k, 1 owner from new, full service history, 7 leather seats (1 spare while wheelchair user on board), folding table, fridge box, air conditioning, power steering, cruise control, single CD & six CD stacker, DVD with drop down screen, privacy glass, alloys. £16,995.00 Tel: 01227 832100 and leave an answerphone message.

PEUGEOT 405 GTXI, top of the range, silver estate, 1.9 litre, auto, hand controls. Reliable and in excellent shape for a 16 year old, but only 72k miles, MOT until March 06. Included is Nesbit Evans Home and Away power wheelchair – 17" seat – with power hoist. £1,000 ono for package. Tel: 01934 642313 (Somerset).

TOYOTA HIACE 2.0, 18k miles, Y reg, diesel, only 2 owners. E/windows, RICON rear lift, carries 4 plus wheelchair. £10,000 ono. Tel: 020 7923 2272.

FORD TRANSIT LWB, 1992, Blue in colour, 2 litre petrol, 1 owner from new, full conversion carried out with car chair, enough room for two wheelchairs on tracks, one chair in the rear, 61000 miles from new, Ratcliff tail lift, new MOT, in good condition for year. £2000 ono. space needed, as new van has arrived. Tel Sue: 020 8304 6808 or email: sue.robins1@btopenworld.com

RENAULT EXTRA 1400CC 1998 'R' reg, red, Poynting adaptation for wheelchair. Lightweight rear ramp, MOT Nov 05, 61k miles. Only £2,200 ono. Tel: 01925 758978.

BROTHERWOOD CONVERTED CITROEN Berlingo 1.6 V reg, 54k miles, 4 seats plus wheelchair. Fully serviced, vgc, £6,000. Tel: 01302 742174 (S. Yorkshire).

RENAULT KANGOO RN1.4 May 2001 adapted by Mobility Solutions Salisbury for wheelchair access, with ramp and two rear seats, blue fsh 30k miles. Excellent Condition. £6250. Tel: 07745 177058.

KIA SEDONA 2.9 CRD LE, metallic gold, auto, air con, CD system, GM Coachwork low floor rear ramp entrance, e/winch. Registered '04, 12k miles, available through recent bereavement, £17,500 ono. Tel: 01223 870268 (Cambridge).

VAUXHALL ASTRA ENVOY 1.6i 3 Door Hatchback Automatic 2001 Y Reg. Metallic green. Jeff Gosling accelerator/brake hand controls with additional indicator switch. 28,000 miles. Remote Central Locking. RDS Radio/CD. MOT to July 2006. Recently serviced. FSH. Recent AA mechanical inspection (report available). £3,650. Staffs/Cheshire border. Tel: 01782 722781 or email adurnall@aol.com

VOLKSWAGEN CARAVELLE GL 2.4 diesel, N reg, blue, 90k miles. With Constables conversion incl RICON side lift, carries 8 incl driver without wheelchair or 6 with wheelchair, 5 with 2 wheelchairs. Only one owner from new, fsh, full MOT, £5,500 ono. Tel: 01206 823166 (Colchester) or Mobile: 07789 936439.

FIAT DOBLO 1.9 JTD Dynamic, 2004, turbo diesel. Metallic green, airbags, remote central locking, air con, e/windows, CD player. Warranty & AA cover till 21/07/2007, 5k miles only. Adapted to carry driver, one passenger & wheelchair occupant or driver & four passengers. £9,995 ono. Tel: 01239 891286 (after 6 p.m.) 07890 052727 (daytime) or e-mail: rhidian@maesgwyn21.freemove.co.uk

CHAIRMAN RENAULT KANGOO 1.4, auto, blue, X reg (Jan 2001), Gowrings conversion incl wheelchair hoists, carries 5 including wheelchair. Left and right accelerators, e/windows and e/mirrors, CD player. Recent MOT, only 2 owners from new, 16k miles, £5,300 ono. Tel: 01594 834723 (Forest of Dean, Glos).

VW CARAVELLE GL 2.5 Tdi, P reg (1997), Ireland Blue, pas, e/mirrors and e/windows, MOT expires April 2006. With Invatravel conversion incl RICON underfloor hydraulic side lift. Only one owner from new, 51k miles, in excellent condition, £7,250 ono. Tel: 01684 310972 (Malvern).

NISSAN PRAIRIE 1.8 Mk 1, F reg, 92k miles, MOT expires May 06, silver. With Brotherwood conversion incl internal ramp at rear, with transfer beam passenger seat, carries 5 including wheelchair, 59" headroom. £1,200 ono. Tel: 01389 841038 (Dumbarton).

SUZUKI WAGON R (Suzuki Life) 1.3, auto, pas, e/windows and e/mirrors, CD player. Drive from wheelchair, fully remote rear tailgate lift, remote rear 1 piece access ramp, automatic wheelchair lock down device, right hand push/pull brake and accelerator hand controls. Fully converted by Jubilee Automotive Group, additional powered lowering rear suspension (to reduce ramp access angle). Bought Feb 2005, only 300 miles, cost £29,000, asking £25,000 ono, genuine reason for sale. Tel Angela: 02476 604739 (Coventry) or mobile: 07774 225663.

DAIHATSU 1300 EFI Hi-jet, fully converted with ramp and winch for wheelchair. '51 reg, MOT expires November, sunroof, pas. Silver, only 2 owners and 13k miles. Bargain at £2,600 for quick sell. Tel: 01252 875654 (N.Hants).

NISSAN PRAIRIE 1.9, J reg (1991) 106k miles, MOT expires June 06, regularly serviced. With Brotherwood conversion, full length rear ramp and raised roof. Carries 5 including wheelchair. In very good condition, £2,900 ono. Tel: 01803 405150 (Paignton).

TOYOTA HIACE POWERBUS. First registered March 2001, 2.5 litre diesel owned from new with fsh, 12 months' MOT, vgc, just less than 35,500 miles. Lewis Reed adapted with hydraulic operated RICON tail lift. Seats driver, 3 passengers and one wheelchair user. £10,000 ono. Please tel Lmrs leslie Hickin: 01226 204784.

RENAULT TRAFIC HIGH top. Lwb, 1.7, petrol, G reg, 89k miles. Mot and taxed, fsh, 1 owner from new. Converted for camping and wheelchair transportation. Tall lift. Restraint system. £2,300. Tel: 01732 353705 (Tonbridge).

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PRIDE JET 7 power chair, new 04/04. £900 ono. For details, tel: 01473 328863 (Ipswich).

R-ABLE 2 COMFORT manual wheelchair. 3 years' old, gives full support, £450 ono. Tel: 0115 9141061 (Nottingham).

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WHEELCHAIR PRIDE MOBILITY 1120 battery powered with dual controls regularly serviced new battery, excellent condition, £3250, £850 tel: 07745 177058.

• Accommodation

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A MODERN DETACHED two bedroom bungalow in Pickering, North Yorkshire with many adaptations for wheelchair user throughout. The accommodation comprises: sitting room, kitchen, two bedrooms, bathroom with disabled shower with wet room finish including floor drainage, UPVC windows and doors and recently added conservatory with ramp access. It is ideal for retirement purposes. Situated in a pleasant and quiet residential location a short flat distance from Pickering town centre. Externally it has easily maintained gardens, garage and a pleasant open aspect to the rear. £169,000. Tel: 01751 472724.

Cont'd see pg 39

• Recruitment (on page 37 to 42)

ila PERSONAL ASSISTANCE SERVICES

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WECIL is a local organisation fully managed by Disabled people working to make a real difference to the lives of Disabled people and their families by delivering empowering independence services.

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Salary scale NJC points 44 – 48, currently £33,753 - £36,963

We are looking for a Disabled person with a proven record in managing an organisation with a range of projects, working at the cutting edge of social policy development.

You will need to inspire our experienced and committed staff team and communicate effectively with a range of agencies at local, regional and national levels. You will need to have a firm commitment to applying the principles of independent living and the social model of disability, along with knowledge and commitment to other equalities issues.

Closing date for applications: Thursday 29th September, 5pm
Interview date: Monday 17th, Tuesday 18th or Wednesday 19th October

WECIL particularly encourages applications from under-represented groups (eg. Disabled people, people from Black and minority ethnic groups, Lesbians and Gay Men).

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RENAULT KANGOO 1.6 LTR PETROL Date first registered: 14/11/2003, colour: Green, No. seats: 3, No. owners: 1, condition: As new, transmission: automatic, mileage: 13000 miles, MOT until: 14/11/2006, 5 door, A.B.S, air bag, automatic transmission, balance of manufactures warranty, electric reels, full width lightweight ramp, immaculate condition inside and out, lowered rear floor for wheelchair access, non-slip flooring, one rear saloon seat, power steering, radio/cd, remote central locking, service history, twin side doors, electric mirrors, electric windows, alloy wheels. **£11,300**

MERCEDES BENZ VITO TRAVELINER 2.2 LTR TURBO DIESEL Date first registered: 05/12/2002, colour: blue, No. seats: 4, No. owners: 1, condition: as new, transmission: manual, mileage: 11,000 miles, MOT until 04/08/2006, 5 door, could take 2 wheelchairs, full width lightweight ramp, immaculate condition inside and out, non-slip flooring, power steering, radio/cassette player, service history, twin side doors, two rear saloon passenger seats. **£12,250**

RENAULT KANGOO 1.4 LTR PETROL Date first registered: 26/05/2000, colour: silver, No. seats: 3, No. owners: 1, condition: very good, transmission: 5 speed manual, mileage: 14,300 miles, MOT until 25/07/2006, 5 door, air bag, electric reels, full width lightweight ramp, lowered rear floor for wheelchair access, non-slip flooring, one rear saloon seat, power steering, radio/cassette player, remote central locking, service history, single front passenger seat, twin side doors. **£7,850**

FORD TRANSIT SWB 2.0 TURBO DIESEL Date first registered: 30/04/2002, colour: blue, No. seats: 6, No. owners: 2, condition: as new, transmission: 5 speed manual, mileage: 3000 miles, MOT until: 29/04/2006, air bag, manual pullout side step, central locking, could take 2 wheelchairs, electric wheelchair lift, semi-high roof, immaculate condition inside and out, non-slip flooring, power steering, raio/single CD player, rear saloon heater, service history, short wheelbase, side load door, triple seat to rear, twin front passenger seat. **£13,250**

VOLKSWAGEN TRANSPORTER T4 1.9 LTR TURBO DIESEL Date first registered: 27/03/2000, colour: blue, No. seats: 4, No. owners: 1, condition: very good, transmission: manual, mileage: 27,000 miles, RICON CLEARWAY electric wheelchair lift, short wheelbase, side load door, single front passenger seat, two rear saloon passenger seats, could take 2 wheelchairs, non-slip flooring, power steering, radio/cassette player, service history. **£9,995**

2001 VOLKSWAGEN TRANSPORTER SWB 2.5TDI TURBO DIESEL 5 seater, automatic, 24,000 miles, hand controls, electric park brake, swivel base driver seats, full width lightweight ramp, non-slip flooring, power steering, Q Straint W/C securing system, side load door, two rear saloon passenger seats. **£11,500**

2000 (X) SUZUKI WAGON R LOWERED FLOOR 1.3 Ltr PETROL Silver, 2 seats, automatic, 5 door, C/L, full width lightweight ramp, non-slip flooring, PAS, twin side doors. **£6,300**

2001 (Y) RENAULT MASTER SWB 2.2 Ltr DIESEL Blue, manual, could take 2 wheelchairs, full width lightweight ramp, non-slip flooring, PAS, short wheelbase, side load door, twin front passenger seat, two rear saloon passenger seats. **£11,700**

2003 PEUGEOT BOXER SWB 2.0 HDI 7 seats, manual, 21,000 miles, balance of manufacturers warranty, could take 2 wheelchairs, immaculate condition inside and out, non-slip flooring, option 9 seater W/C access at additional cost, side load door, twin front passenger seat, wheelchair access including restraints, safety belts & ramps, wheelchair access, telescopic ramps, full width ramp. **£11,950**

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51	Volkswagen Transporter D. Chair-lift and rear seats
03 choice	Renault Kangoo s. Lowered floor & rear seats
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54	Fiat Doblo Hi Roof Diesels. 5 seats , wheelchair access
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X	Mercedes V Class 220CDI . Ramps .Luxury MPV
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• Recruitment (on page 37 to 42)

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ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND

London Disability Arts Forum

Is looking for a

Co-Editor for Disability Arts in London Magazine (DAIL)

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We are looking for a dynamic, creative person to:

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- Manage production, budgeting and administration with the current co-editor
- Increase advertising revenue

Essential skills:

- Proven writing and editorial skills
- Ability to write accessible and thought-provoking material
- Active interest and experience of Disability Arts
- Ability to write clear, concise reports to external organisations
- Computer skills: Working knowledge of QuarkXpress, Photoshop, Microsoft Office, Illustrator and database management

Please contact London Disability Arts Forum for a full job description and application form. Please state the post for which you are applying. To contact tel: **0207 916 5484**; email: theresa@ldaf.org; fax **0207 916 5396**. Deadline for applications has been extended to **23 September 2005 5pm**.

This post is only open to disabled people (exemption under the Disability Discrimination Act 2004)



Royal
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'Helping Pharmacists achieve excellence'

Appointments Group - Members (part-time)

Location: Central London

The Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain is the regulatory and professional body for pharmacists (45,500 member pharmacists and 1,400 pharmacy technicians).

To prepare for new legislation, the Society is establishing an Appointments Group to appoint, initially, circa 40 members to form 4 new shadow Statutory Committees: **Disciplinary, Health, Investigating, and Registration Appeals.**

The Appointments Group will comprise an independent Chairman, Elizabeth Filkin, a Deputy Chairman (lay), two pharmacists and a pharmacy technician.

Applications are invited for:

Deputy Chairman (Lay)

- Proven track record in making Board level appointments (public, private or voluntary sectors)
- Knowledge and/or experience of representing the interests of the general public
- Experience of chairing meetings
- General understanding of and interest in the NHS, healthcare professions and pharmacy in Great Britain
- Never been a registered pharmacist or pharmacy technician

Pharmacists (x 2) & Pharmacy Technician

- Pharmacists: practising part of the RPSGB's Register of Pharmacists. Pharmacy technician: practising part of the RPSGB's Voluntary Register for Pharmacy Technicians
- Considerable experience of pharmacy practice
- General understanding of and interest in the NHS, healthcare professions and pharmacy in Great Britain

Tasks of the Appointments Group members:

According to procedures determined by the Chairman, fairly, objectively and transparently, to:

- Agree a shortlist of potential committee members
- Interview shortlisted candidates
- Appoint shadow committee members and report appointed members to the Council of the RPSGB.

Applicants must have:

- Best practice interviewing and selection experience
- Senior level committee or team work experience
- Good communication and analytical skills
- Commitment to the principles of Public Life: - Selflessness, Integrity, Objectivity, Accountability, Openness, Honesty and Leadership

Time commitment:

Two days briefing and training during November 2005, twenty days interviewing from December 2005 to March 2006. Term of office 4 years, possibility of one renewal.

Remuneration: A daily attendance fee will be paid plus expenses.

For an application pack please email: ftprecruitment@rpsgb.org or call **020 7572 2626**. Applicants are required to complete an application form, write a statement outlining how they meet the requirements, include their CV and send to: **Jeanne Thircuir, Recruitment Manager, Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain, 1 Lambeth High Street, London SE1 7JN.** Closing date: Friday 23rd September 2005. Interviews: late October 2005. We welcome applications from **Wales** and **Scotland**. Applications cannot be considered from members or previous members of the Council of the RPSGB.

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2 newly converted barns on small family farm. Fully wheelchair accessible. Ensuite bedrooms. Sleeps up to 6. For details contact Esme Eyles 01726 883240 or www.treworgansfarm.co.uk

Central Devon: 3 comfortable

ground floor manor farmhouse apartments, M2 wheelchair accessible. Picturesque, peaceful situation, on-site coarse fishing. Half mile Crediton, 8 miles Exeter. No smoking/pets. Ideal holiday base. ☆☆☆☆ Graded. Tel: **01363 772684**, www.creedymanor.com

HARTGROVE FARM, DORSET

Award winning holiday cottages on working farm. A really lovely holiday for disabled guests and their families. Glorious countryside and views. Logfires, C.H. mobile hoist and other equipment.

Tel: **01747 811830**
email: cottages@hartgrovefarm.co.uk
www.hartgrovefarm.co.uk

The Algarve, Portugal

Small hotel owned and run by English family. Home from home. Happy and friendly. Home cooked food. Diets catered for. All bedrooms en-suite. Our own swimming pool and grass bowling green. Golfing bookings can be made. We are fully equipped for wheelchair users, their families and friends. Met at Faro airport. For brochures and flights with A.T.O.L. agents, tel: 00 351 289 396589, tel UK: 01 895 471 631, fax: 00 351 289 394924.

• Recruitment (on page 37 to 42)

The University of Kent frequently recruits for clerical assistants, technicians and IT assistants, administrative staff, research and lecturing staff across our faculties.

Staff who have a disability are currently under-represented and we wish to improve the diversity of our workforce
The University is a member of the double tick pledge and will interview all applicants who meet the essential criteria.

For information about our vacancies please check our recruitment website

<http://www.kent.ac.uk/registry/personnel/vacancies.htm>.

For details in different formats, please apply to The Personnel Department. Textphone users please phone

01227 824145.

We actively promote equal opportunity in education and employment and welcome applicants from all sections of the community.

KENT
UNIVERSITY OF KENT



• Holidays

NORMANDY FRANCE

Magnificent farm house peacefully situated in glorious countryside. Sleep up to 13. 6 bedrooms. 4 bathrooms. Ground floor fully accessible with large en suite bedroom. W.C. Bath. Wheel in shower. Mobile hoist. Private gardens with heated swimming pool. Discounts ferries and small parties. Beautiful, unspoilt beaches 25 mins. Tel: 01747 812019. Fax: 01747 811066. Email: smart@hartgrovefarm.co.uk Web: www.normandyfarmhouses.co.uk

PENROSE BURDEN NORTH CORNWALL "Holiday Care Award Winners"

Holiday Cottages designed for wheelchair users and their families. Rural setting with superb views. Dogs welcome. Wood burning stoves and daily meal service. Please ring or write for colour brochure. R&N Hall, Penrose Burden, St Breward, Bodmin, Cornwall PL30 4LZ. Telephone Bodmin (01208) 850277 or 850617 www.penroseburden.co.uk

An idyllic & peaceful cumbria beauty spot. The Tranquil Otter. Lux lodges with sauna & whirlpool bath/hot-tub, logburner. All lakeside position with picture book views. Outstanding w/c accessible lodges, paths, shops etc. Wheelchair Boat! 01228 576661. www.thetranquilotter.co.uk

Brittany Cottage to let. Adapted for wheelchair use. Good access to beaches. Sleeps up to 6. Details **C. Hodgson.** Tel (01924) 499220. www.brimartravel.co.uk

WORLD ACCESS TRAVEL.COM
 "Opening up the world for people with disabilities"
 We tailor holidays to your requirements, wherever you wish to travel & have a range of "ready made" vacations in Europe to meet your needs. See our web site: www.world-access-travel.com or contact us by e-mail, phone or letter!
 World Access Travel.Com, 10 Oaklands Business Park, Ferndale, CF43 4UG. Email: info@world-access-travel.com; tel: 01443 732625.

Fully adapted gold star caravan for hire on a popular family site in Burnham on Sea. Fishing lake on site. Tel: 0117 951 3193

Norfolk, Nar Valley Holiday Cottages

3 self-catering, all wheelchair accessible, 1 with wheel-in shower room, 2 with airbaths. Mostly en-suite. Electric bed. On working farm – peaceful location, central for beaches and tourist attractions. Indoor heated swimming pool. **More details and prices, contact: Rosemary on 01760 338797.**

Altinkum – Turkey

2 & 3 Bed, Sleeps 6 & 8. Brand New Fully Wheelchair Accessible Luxury Accommodation on Holiday Complex. Includes, Ramps, 3 Pools, Hoist, Wheel-in Shower, Grab Rails, Raised Toilet, Wide Doors/Corridors and More. Visit www.DisabledDestinationAbroad.com Tel: 07709 880532.

• Accommodation

Accessible or adapted property to sell or let? Searching for accessible or adapted property? The Accessible Property Register 'Bringing accessible property into the mainstream'. Tel: 0114 2307058, web: www.accessible-property.org.uk

Support for disabled people

If you have a disability or health condition that affects your chances of finding or keeping a job, ask to see a Disability Employment Adviser. Disability Employment Advisers are based in Jobcentre Plus offices and Jobcentres and offer a wide range of advice and support. They can help you find a job, or stay in work if you are already employed.

The specialist service that Disability Employment Advisers provide, includes:

- advice on finding and keeping a job
- information on training
- support with benefit entitlement and programmes like New Deal, and
- advice on employing disabled people.

Contact your local Jobcentre Plus office or Jobcentre for further information.

www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk



Including Jobcentres and social security offices



disability network hounslow

Senior Direct Payments Advisor

Direct Payments is a government initiative to provide support to Disabled People to allow them to manage their own care packages.

We are looking for an enthusiastic team member to co-ordinate the Direct Payments Support Service, provide case work supervision for the current advisors and manage their own on-going case load in relation to Disabled People using, or considering, Direct Payments.

£26,307 – 27,759 SO2 (+5% pension contribution)

35 hours a week based in the London Borough of Hounslow

For an informal chat about the post or an application pack please contact the acting Director, Edward Tetbury, on tel **020 8758 2048**, fax 020 8758 2014, minicom 020 8758 2065 or email mail@disabilitynetworkhounslow.org (please specify format required)

Disabled People are particularly encouraged to apply for this post. Experience of Direct Payments work preferred but not essential.

Please note this worker will need to have experience of dealing with a range of Disabled People, including those with physical & sensory impairments, mental health needs and learning difficulties.

Closing date: 30th September 2005.

Interview date: 5th October 2005.

شبكة الاتصالات للمعوقين في هونسلو *Reseau des Handicapes à Hounslow* انجمن معزوران هانسلو

This post is funded by the London Borough of Hounslow



• Household/Family

PRESTIGE VOLKER 3010 fully electronically adjustable bed. Height as well as head, body and legs adjustment. Retractable bed guards. Finished in light wood and brushed aluminium. Virtually unused and in excellent condition. Half price at £900. Tel: 07736 697936 (Berkshire).

• Bicycles/tricycles

RED 3-WHEELER Supa Trike (WRK), parking brake on right handlebar, pedal clips and safety strap on saddle. 1.5:1 gear ratio, pedalling backwards will brake wheel. Cost new: over £500, sale due to bereavement. Accept £150. Tel: 01789 763447 (Stratford-upon-Avon). Email: sjblackburn1@btoopenworld.com

SEND US YOUR SMALLS...

...and make a big impression. Small ads in DN reach over 60,000 people for just £9 a line. All small ads must be paid for in advance. If you want to advertise, please use the form provided. Send it with a cheque for the total to Disability Now, 6 Market Road, London N7 9PW.



14th-15th October 2005
The Business Design Centre, Islington, London

The UK's leading recruitment, volunteering and training event or the not-for-profit / public sector.

Visit www.forum3.co.uk for your FREE ticket or call the forum3 hotline on 020 7299 8702

- Meet 150 leading charities, housing associations, arts organisations, local government and other nfp organisations
- 1000s of jobs and volunteering opportunities
- Over 60 career development seminars
- Specialist fundraising recruitment zone
- CV advice



www.forum3.co.uk The UK's leading Not-For-Profit Recruitment Event

forum3 in partnership with:



Creating opportunities with disabled people

LEONARD CHESHIRE

Leonard Cheshire is Britain's leading disability care charity enabling over 21,000 Service Users to lead a full life of their own choice.

Central Regional Office - Banbury Independent Living Advisor

CIRCA £20,000 PER ANNUM

A new position has arisen within Leonard Cheshire for an Independent Living Advisor to support Service Users who wish to move into supported or independent living across the Central Region, through liaising with Service Managers and appropriate external bodies.

The ideal candidate will have at least 2 year's experience of working with disabled people and a good working knowledge of the benefits and housing systems processes. The post is based at the Central Regional Office in Banbury, but you will be required to travel to other services within the region.

Key duties & responsibilities will include advising Service Managers, Service Users and groups of staff of the general and current options available to persons with a range of disabilities for supported or independent living. You will assist Service Users in the process of applying to move on, including completing application forms to Housing Departments and/or Housing Associations as well as research and investigate particular options for individual or appropriate groups of Service Users through contact with relevant Local Authority Housing Departments, Supporting People Teams, Housing Associations and Social Workers.

In return you can expect to be offered a competitive salary plus a contributory pension scheme, excellent training and development opportunities and ongoing support from your colleagues and regional team.

If you would like further information about the post, please contact Helen Dallas on 01933 440930.

For an application pack please contact Karen Lewis, Leonard Cheshire, Central Region Office, Greenhill House, Adderbury, Oxon OX17 3JB. Tel: 01295 816600. Email: Karen.lewis@lc-uk.org

Closing date: Wednesday 7th September 2005.

www.leonard-cheshire.org

All vacancies are subject to enhanced disclosure. Registered Charity No: 218186.



DEADLINE

**DN Extra September 2005 published
10 September. Classified deadlines:
Booking and copy: 31 August.**

**Disability Now October 2005 published
24 September. Classified deadlines:
Booking: 9 September.
Copy: 13 September.**

National Probation Service Humberside

NATIONAL PROBATION SERVICE
for England and Wales

Enforcement, rehabilitation and public protection

Humberside

Diversity Panel Members – Humberside (x4)

Post Number – DPNB1

As and when required (times to be arranged)

Remuneration - £14 per hour - 2 year period (subject to continued funding)

Consulting the community about policy and service delivery is top of the agenda for the National Probation Service – Humberside, we are looking for four new members to step forward to join a Diversity Panel operated on behalf of local Criminal Justice Agencies. The 12 strong panel made up of people from diverse backgrounds such as Minority Ethnic, Disabled, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered (LGBT) as well as members with experience of working with women is an initiative funded by the Humberside Criminal Justice (HCJB) to assist with community engagement across the area.

To enable Criminal Justice Agencies to truly reflect the communities they serve and ensure equality for everyone the Diversity Panel's role is to reach out and listen to people whose voices have previously not been heard. We would encourage anyone to apply who thinks they can help particularly those with experience of disability or LGBT issues and who live in or around Hull.

If you would like to find out more and are interested in applying for any of the posts, then please contact the Diversity Manager on 01482 480176 for an informal chat.

Application packs are available on written request only, enclosing an A4 addressed envelope, from The Personnel Section, National Probation Service Humberside, Head Office, 21 Flemingate, Beverley, HU17 0NP. Closing date for the completed applications is FIRST POST on **Friday 9th September 2005**. Please quote post number.

Please note if you have not received correspondence from The National Probation Service – Humberside within 6 weeks of the closing date you will not have been shortlisted for interview. You will need a Criminal Records Check for the above post.

The National Probation Service- Humberside is committed to a policy of Equal Opportunity for all staff and applications are positively welcomed from ethnic minorities and people with a disability who are presently under-represented in the Service at this level. The National Probation Service – Humberside operates a guaranteed interview scheme for disabled people (as defined by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995) who meet the essential criteria for this post. We will not discriminate on grounds of gender, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, faith or any other factor irrelevant to a persons work.



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plus a free gift of your choice
(while stocks last)**

Pay just £13 for 12 issues (usual price £18)

news • campaigns • features • information • health
holidays • jobs • sports • arts and our mid-month
subscriber-only edition **DN Extra**

0845 120 7001

You can now pay by Direct Debit. Offer ends on 23.09.05



Please return this form to Disability Now Subscriptions, FREEPOST NATE1512, Somerset, TA11 6ZA.

Name:	Address:		Postcode:	Tel No:
I enclose a cheque/postal order for £_____ made payable to <i>Disability Now</i> I authorise you to charge my Visa <input type="checkbox"/> Mastercard <input type="checkbox"/> Switch <input type="checkbox"/> Card No: <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> Iss No: (Switch only) _____ Valid from: <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> / <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> Expiry date: <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> / <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> Signature: _____ Date: _____				
Tick one free gift: <i>DN CD holder</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>DN Mug</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Boots Vouchers</i> <input type="checkbox"/> or <i>M&S Vouchers</i> <input type="checkbox"/>				

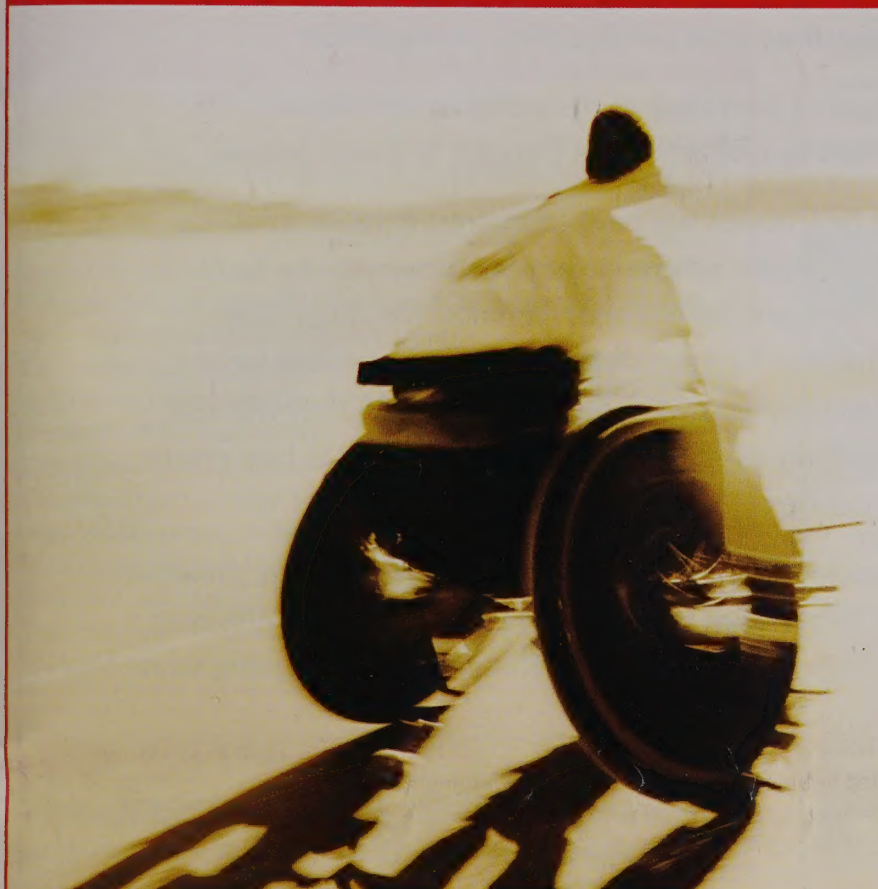
DN09/05

• Recruitment (on page 37 to 42)

east THAMES

Diversity means more at East Thames

WE HAVE OPPORTUNITIES IN: ADMINISTRATION • CALL CENTRE • FINANCE • HOUSING • ICT • MAINTENANCE • HUMAN RESOURCES
PRESS & COMMUNICATIONS • YOUTH WORK • CARE & SUPPORT WORK • REGENERATION • SALES & MARKETING



At East Thames, our aim is very simple: to make a positive and lasting contribution to the diverse neighbourhoods in which we work.

With over 25 years of success, we have enjoyed impressive growth and now own or manage more than 12,500 homes throughout east London and Essex. Looking forward to our future, we plan to double in size over the next five years.

At East Thames, diversity is a real and tangible thing - not just a word. The variety of cultures within our geographical area means that we're part of one of the most diverse communities in the UK, a fact that's reflected in our workforce.

Ours is a forward-thinking organisation that provides care and quality, affordable housing. Our work is both challenging and rewarding, but the best thing about it is that, no matter what part you play at East Thames, you'll be contributing to the transformation of someone's life.

We rely on the talents of people across a wide range of fields, which means that whatever your skills, there's probably a role for you.

For further information about us and to apply for current vacancies, visit www.east-thames.co.uk

Alternatively you can telephone us on 020 8522 2000.

We welcome applications from people with disabilities, as they are currently under-represented in the Group. We are an equal opportunities employer.



MORE THAN A HOUSING ASSOCIATION

DISABILITY ACCESS ADVISER

£25,407 - £27,373 PRO RATA (28 HOURS)
COUNTY HALL CAMPUS, WORCESTER

Improving all aspects of our accessibility to people with disabilities is the key objective for this new post.

You will advise on improving physical access to our buildings, and also wider aspects of access to our services, including improvements to telephone and web-based services. Working with colleagues you will be part of the cultural changes in promoting disability and equality and have a key role in ensuring that we employ more people with disabilities.

You will have experience of a role with an equalities remit, knowledge of equalities legislation and excellent influencing skills. The ability to travel is essential.

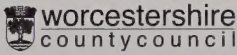
Informal enquiries to Bridget Clark, HR Strategy and Performance on 01905 766215.

Apply online or view the job description and person specification at www.worcestershire.gov.uk/jobs

Closing date: 12th September 2005.

Interviews will take place week commencing: 19th September 2005.

apply online at
www.worcestershire.gov.uk



We welcome applications from men and women of all backgrounds and ethnic groups, including those with disabilities.

People like us,
serving people
like you

Scope for you to banish disablism

These positions are reserved for disabled people

Parliamentary Affairs Officer

£26,721 per annum (inc ILW) - London N7

Participation Co-ordinator

£23,858 per annum (not including ILW) Fixed 12 month contract - Location Flexible

External Affairs Assistant (Campaigns)

£19,612 per annum (inc ILW) - London N7

Find out more about these opportunities at our jobs page on www.scope.org.uk

Alternatively, Tel: 0207 619 7245. Minicom: 0207 619 7137.

scope

Time to get equal

Scope is a Registered Charity

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

We have significant benefits available to our employees including generous annual leave entitlement, final salary pension scheme, childcare vouchers, flexible working where operationally practicable, discounts on rail/bus travel and discounted memberships at local Sports and Leisure Centres.

DIRECT YOUR AMBITION

Direct Payments Development Officer

£22,113 - £30,891 p.a.

37 hours per week

Ref: ASC859a/DN

At Buckinghamshire, we're committed to ensuring that people with disabilities and older people have control over their care. That's why we're promoting Direct Payments, a scheme that offers money to service users in lieu of community care services, giving them the flexibility to manage their own care. Working in conjunction with the Advisory Service, social workers, and care managers, you will ensure service users have the appropriate support to manage their Direct Payments. You will also work to increase take-up for people with learning disabilities and older people by liaising with service users and colleagues.

We're looking for someone who can drive through change and get results. Ideally a qualified social worker, you will have experience of working with people with disabilities together with some understanding of the Direct Payments process. Creative and resilient, you will bring strong communication and negotiation skills.

If you relish the chance to take control of your career and would like to find out more about our forward-thinking service, please contact Mary Williams, Group Manager, Adult Social Care, on 01296 382881.

Please visit our website at www.buckscc.gov.uk/vacancies
Alternatively call 01296 383366 (24 hour answer machine) or e-mail: recruitment@buckscc.gov.uk for an application pack.

Closing date: 12 noon, 9th September 2005.

www.buckscc.gov.uk/vacancies

Positively welcoming applications from all parts of the community



CONDITIONS - Disability Now maintains the right to amend or withdraw lineage adverts without prior notice. All adverts must comply with the British Code of Advertising Practice. Telephone numbers and addresses will not be placed in personal adverts, for confidentiality. Instead, Box numbers will be provided. Likewise, telephone numbers and addresses will not be given out over the telephone if requested. Box Numbers can be requested for non-personal adverts. However, it may limit the response to it. If you want to advertise documents, goods or services contact Patrick Durham-Matthews tel: 020 7619 7320, fax: 020 7619 7331. Lineage adverts can only be used by private individuals. All commercial enquiries must be addressed to Richard Gresham (see contact details above). DN cannot accept responsibility for loss or damage of adverts or letters during forwarding. It is the responsibility of the advertiser to check the content of their advert, and to ensure any abbreviations cannot be misunderstood.

• **Public appointments**

Improving the life chances of disabled people

Your opinion counts

'Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People' is a long-term programme of work to improve the opportunities for disabled people. To do this, we want to create a government **Office for Disability Issues** to bring together disabled people's interests. Because we want disabled people to take part in government policy, we also want to create a **National Forum for Organisations of Disabled People**.

As part of this process, we are keen to capture the views of disabled people and anyone else who has suggestions or opinions on the creation of the new bodies. Your views and suggestions will help shape future plans.

You can:


- make any comments in writing to Anju Thind, Department for Work and Pensions, FREEPOST PHQ5, London WC2N 6BR (e-mail anju.thind@dwp.gsi.gov.uk), or

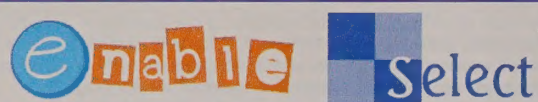
- by completing our short questionnaire. The questionnaire is contained within a leaflet which can be accessed on the internet at www.direct.gov.uk/disability-youropinion

- Request a hard copy of the leaflet or alternative formats by contacting the Freepost or e-mail address.

These new bodies will have an interest in issues affecting disabled people, wherever they live. However, the Scottish Parliament and the National Assembly for Wales have responsibility for most of the policies and services for disabled people in Scotland and Wales, and they will also be engaging separately with disabled people to help create these policies.

We would appreciate responses as early as possible, preferably by **16 September 2005**; however, responses after this date will also be extremely helpful in informing our ongoing work.

 **HM Government**

• **Services**

Enable Enterprises' Select is a leading online disability shop offering projects which can not be found elsewhere. From adult bibs and feeding aprons with sleeves to swimming jackets, hats and verruca socks. Come and visit our online shop. www.enableenterprises.com/select or phone 0800 358 8484.

Live how YOU want to...

ENA provide specialist "live-in" care, tailored to the individual needs of our clients.

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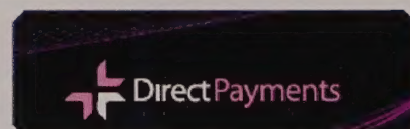
Give us a call on **08456 442294** London & Home Counties
Alternatively, take a look at our website
www.ena.co.uk

European Nursing Agency Ltd.

Smallford Lane, St Albans, Herts. AL4 0SA

• **Tender**

**Northamptonshire
County Council**



TENDER FOR DIRECT PAYMENTS SUPPORT SERVICE

Do you want to be involved in an exciting drive to develop **Direct Payments** further in Northamptonshire?

Northamptonshire County Council is committed to giving people choice, independence and control. We have invested heavily into our **Direct Payments** scheme and are determined to improve the lives of Service Users as well as meet our targets.

We have increased this population from 70 service Users in April 2004 to 180 in July 2005 and are aiming for 450 by April 2007.

We are looking for an organisation that can support us in delivering **Direct Payments** for all service groups, help promote the scheme, and the ethos of independence. You will be supporting Service Users and providing them with information and advice, setting up a payroll service for them to use and helping the council achieve its targets.

The Council is keen to hear from both existing and potential providers who have the enthusiasm and ability to work in partnership with the Council and Service Users to deliver this scheme and achieve the targets. The contract will be for 3 years and will commence in April 2006.

Organisations wishing to express an interest in tendering for this contract can do so in writing, by e-mail to DirectPayments@Northamptonshire.gov.uk or **James Varlow, Direct Payments, Northamptonshire County Council, PO Box 225, John Dryden House, 8-10 The Lakes, Northampton, NN4 7DF.**

The closing date for receipt of expressions of interest is **13th September 2005.**

THE CRUCIBLE

The Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) is giving away two top price seats, worth up to £80, to one DN reader for its new production of *The Crucible* by Arthur Miller on Tuesday 28 February 2006. The tickets also include the chance to attend a pre-show talk by the director of the show, Dominic Cooke.

The RSC is celebrating the life and work of Arthur Miller with one of his greatest plays. This production of *The Crucible* is presented by arrangement with Josef Weinberger Ltd.

For your chance to win a pair of tickets tick 'The Crucible' on the entry form.

To find out more about the production and to purchase tickets call 0870 609 1110, 01789 403 436 (booking number for disabled people) or visit www.rsc.org.uk



VALUING PEOPLE CLIPART COLLECTION CD

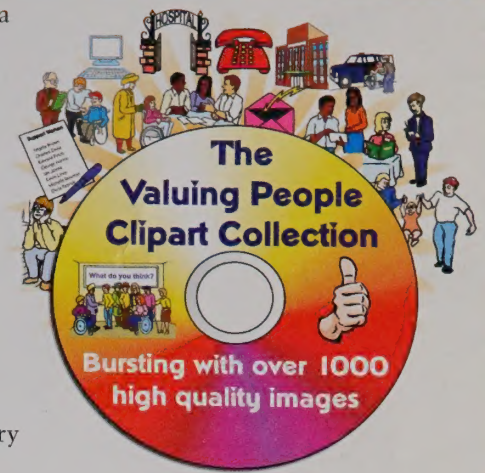
Thanks to Inspired Services five DN readers can win a ClipArt Collection CD worth £75 (or £40 for self-advocacy groups).

The Valuing People ClipArt Collection CD, consists of over 1,000 full colour high quality illustrations to help make information easier to read. There are 20 different categories of clipart on the CD, including access, children, carers, parents, ethnic minorities, government, transport and money. The CD has just been updated and includes over 400 new images and background scenes to make your own compositions with a variety of different people and situations to suit you.

To win a ClipArt Collection CD tick 'CD' on the entry form.

Inspired Services is also offering a ten per cent discount on the first 25 orders received from DN readers. You will need to quote 'DN' when you place an order.

To place an order or to find out more about the ClipArt Collection CD call 0870 740 4887 or visit www.inspiredservices.org.uk



Inspired services
Publishing • Expert Advice • Support

LAST MONTH'S WINNERS

The winners of the *Born on the Fourth of July* DVDs, in the July issue, were, in order, C.Chattey from Essex, C.Harrison from Hampshire, J.Drea from Burnley, R.Priest from Bedminster and D.Plaskett from Portsmouth.

The winners of the Simply Practical Clothing women's night dress, casual wear trousers with matching loose top and men's pyjamas were, in order, P.Locke from West Sussex, G.Garbutt from Durham and R.King from Bristol.

The winners of Simplantex Scooter Shelters, in the motoring supplement, were, in order, M.Ansted from Cambridge and J.Ferguson from Lancashire.

The winner of the Indipod was R.Phillipson from Lancashire. The winners of the Blue Badge wallets were, in order, S.Mills from N.Hampshire, A.Page from North Hampton, E.Martin from Leeds, M.Lalji from London, M.Wright from Wiltshire, G.Mittoo from Kent, F.Whateley from Oxfordshire, P.Attwood from London, D.Friend from Oxford, K.Coe from Staffordshire, B.Ward from S.Yorkshire and P.Herbert from Bedminster.

to enter

Tick the competition circle below, add your details, and send for

FREE to *Disability Now*, Freepost WD4323, London N7 9BR, or you can fax it on 020 7619 7331, or email the details to: fiona.mitchell@scope.org.uk

The Crucible ☐ CD ☐ Verko ☐



terms & conditions • closing date for entrants: 16.09.05 • Entrants must be over 18 • No proof of purchase required • UK entrants only • No cash alternatives • Winners notified by post • Editor's decision is final • Special offers not open to DN staff or associates • Winners may be announced in DN • In association with Inspired Services, Verko and Royal Shakespeare Company. We may use your name and address for further marketing purposes. Please tick the box if you do not wish your details to be included ☐

DN next month

All the best news, views, jobs and offers. On sale 24 September.

THE DDA A YEAR ON

DN looks at whether access has really improved during the last 12 months, through reader experiences, cases that disabled people have tried to launch and expert opinion

CLOTHES COURSE

Helen Smith takes to the aisles as she tries to find fashionable, affordable outfits in her home town

LIBERTY IN THE CITY

DN reviews London's annual disability rights festival

EASY LIVING WITH STYLE

Thanks to Verko one DN reader can win a stylish lap board worth £29.95. The Verko lap tray, with its birch-wood top and soft cushion, is the perfect solution for when you need a smart and sturdy portable lap table or tray. It is ideal for TV dinners on the sofa, lap top work, studying in the garden, car excursions or breakfast in bed.

This is just one of a range of aids for easier living without compromising on style which includes walking sticks, large display products, comfort aids, easier to use gadgets, kitchen utensils and gardening tools.

For your chance to win a Verko lap board tick 'Verko' on the entry form.

To find out more about the Verko range call on 0208 374 5809 or visit www.verko.co.uk, email on info@verko.co.uk



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Drive from your own wheelchair

WHEREVER YOU WANT TO BE
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Motability 0121 502 2252

www.jubileeauto.co.uk

Jubilee Automotive Group Ltd, Woden Road South, Wednesbury, West Midlands, WS10 0NQ. Opening hours Mon-Fri 9 to 6 pm, Sat 9 to 2 pm. Prices shown presume exemption from VAT and Disabled Road Tax. Vehicles shown may have optional specification.

Vexel Quovis is a wonderfully innovative drive-from-wheelchair compact vehicle.

Fully automated; both access and driving couldn't be simpler. A single press of the remote control fob opens the rear tailgate and then deploys the short access ramp.

Once on-board, just select the 'Drive' position on the automatic gear selector and you are ready to go, wherever you want to be

Now available on
Motability 5 year lease

Different by Design

VW T5 Cruiser MkII

VW Shuttle SE

VW Caravelle Executive

Sample Layouts

Safety Tested Front Passenger Position

Also Available

Citroen Berlingo

Renault Kangoo Automatic

Flexi-seat
seating system

TorSpring
TorSpring

The all new Volkswagen range of Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles, upfront and affordable

The all new **VW range** from Lewis Reed is possibly the most comprehensive range of single marque wheelchair accessible vehicles ever launched.

Packed full of choices for the wheelchair passenger including a fully safety tested front passenger wheelchair position, there are over 20 different seating layouts, 2 wheelbase lengths, 2 roof heights and a staggering 18 different models to choose from.

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Models shown may have features only available as optional extras.



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